



THE INDEPENDENT

Na 3,700

THURSDAY 27 AUGUST 1998

(1RS0p) 45p

24-PAGE NEWS SECTION

36-PAGE LISTINGS SUPPLEMENT

24-PAGE BROADSHEET REVIEW



RSC bid to bring the house down

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INSIDE: THE ONLY OFFICIAL UCAS GUIDE TO UNIVERSITY PLACES



China's flood of propaganda

FILM, COMMENT, FAST TRACK TO EDUCATION

Clinton to visit Omagh in the name of peace

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton will visit Omagh next week to express "his sympathy and condolences" after the bomb in which 28 people died, the White House said last night.

The announcement that he has changed his schedule for the visit on 3 September came after the British and Irish governments met to discuss the fight against terrorism. After meetings in Cong, Co Mayo, with his Irish counterpart, Bertie Ahern, Tony Blair said the governments were "march-

ing in step together" and that violence by the Real IRA would not deflect them from pressing ahead for political progress.

"Our joint determination is that their terrorist activities should not thwart the decided will of the vast majority of people on both sides of the border," he said.

The White House said that Mr Clinton saw his visit to Omagh as "a way of continuing

to support the peace process and make it clear that those who would use violence to stop the peace process will not succeed". Mr Clinton leaves the US on Sunday for a Moscow summit and is scheduled to visit Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic between 3 September and 5 September.

Mr Blair defended his proposed anti-terrorist package against criticism that it would erode the civil liberties of innocent people. Risk could be avoided "provided we do it in a

measured, careful and targeted way. These measures, tough though they are, are justified." The package had to remain focused "on this recalcitrant rump of extremists".

Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness called it "a massive knee-jerk reaction" and said the RUC could not be trusted with such added powers.

"We've found in the last 30 years that innocent people do suffer and do find themselves behind bars."

Last night Mr Blair was fac-

ing growing Labour unrest over plans for rushing the legislation through the Commons next week in two days.

Kevin McNamara, a former Labour spokesman on Northern Ireland, said Mr Blair could regret rushing the legislation, as Labour had done over the Prevention of Terrorism Act in the wake of the Birmingham pub bombings in 1974. "I am concerned about pushing legislation through in this way. I am not saying it is not needed, but there are hundreds of ques-

tions to be asked and we have not yet had answers," he said. "I can understand the Government wanting to appear to take firm action after Omagh. But the question is whether what we are doing is wise and is it really necessary."

Downing Street sources hinted that, while the proposals will not be removed from the statute-book once the Real IRA has been dealt with, they may be sidelined and fall into disuse.

Mr Ahern said the political part of yesterday's discussion

concentrated on removing obstacles and creating conditions where the parties in the new Stormont assembly could co-operate fully to implement the Good Friday agreement. "We need just a bit of progress, but we will get there," he said.

Sources in both governments said the two prime ministers' joint efforts during the Omagh crisis have helped seal an exceptional degree of co-operation and trust. Yesterday they also considered more Garda-RUC cross-border co-

operation and progress following repeated appeals, to dissident republican groups, for permanent cease-fires, made publicly and privately through intermediaries by Dublin since the 23 May referendum results.

There was speculation yesterday of disarray in Real IRA ranks after a reported meeting in Co Clare of senior members held to discuss its future, at which the former IRA quartermaster-general and founder of the splinter group was not present.

Top US firms on alert for bombers

UNITED STATES corporations around the world were last night studying ways to lower the profiles of their foreign operations following Tuesday's bomb blast at a Planet Hollywood restaurant in Cape Town.

In the wake of confirmation that the bomb was probably linked to Washington's cruise missile strikes in Sudan and Afghanistan, both Boeing, the aircraft manufacturer, and Intel, which makes computer chips, are among companies that have urged employees either to postpone trips abroad or to take extra precautions while travelling overseas. Walt Disney said it had cancelled a series of events planned for this weekend in Dubai.

Security was also tightened at Planet Hollywood branches in London and around the world. Nine Britons - including five members of one family - were among the 27 injured in the Cape Town explosion in which one person also died.

Tony Giddings, 38, his wife Mandy, 35, father Brian, 65, and their children Laura, 8, and Jacob, 3, were all said to be seriously ill in hospital last night. The family, from Hampshire, were on holiday in Cape Town. Four other British people resident in South Africa were also seriously injured, but have asked for no publicity.

Two FBI agents were expected to arrive in Cape Town late last night from the US task force set up in the Kenyan capital Nairobi to investigate the American embassy bombings, which claimed 257 lives in Kenya and Tanzania this month.

BY DAVID USBORNE in New York and MARY BRAID in Johannesburg

While there is no palpable sense of alarm among the American public, extraordinary steps have been taken to tighten security at airports, public monuments and government buildings. Concrete barriers ring the Washington Monument near the White House and SWAT teams patrol outside entrances to the Pentagon. Disney confirmed it had bolstered security at its theme parks.

"This has really opened the floodgates for attacks against Americans," said Charlie LeBlanc, managing director of Air Routing International, which advises corporations on security for executives travelling abroad. "We're telling people to blend in at their destination as much as they can." That means removing US airline tags and discarding obviously American clothing.

The South African Security Minister, Sydney Mufamadi, said yesterday he believed it was likely the attack was in retaliation for the US missile strikes which followed the bombings of the American embassies. The fact that a pipe bomb was used in the attack has raised suspicions that a local group may have been responsible rather than an international Muslim network. "These pipe bombs... are a very common phenomenon in the Western Cape," said Parks Mankahlana, a spokesman for President Nelson Mandela.

Family critical, page 2



Young people pelting each other with tomatoes during the annual 'Tomatina' tomato festival in Bunol, near Valencia, eastern Spain, yesterday. Manuel Bruque/AFP

League tables under fire over increase in GCSE failures

MORE PUPILS are failing GCSE examinations this year, prompting accusations that schools are neglecting the slowest pupils because of league tables.

Figures released today show a fall in the pass rate for only the second time in a decade. The results are a blow for David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, who has repeatedly emphasised the need to cut the number of pupils leaving school without qualifications.

While the number of entries awarded grades A*-C is up just 0.3 percentage points, the

BY JUDITH JUDD Education Correspondent

overall pass rate (grades A*-G) fell by 0.8 per cent. The gap between the most and least able pupils appears to be widening: entries awarded grades A and A* increased by 0.7 per cent.

School heads and teachers called on the Government to change exam league tables which show the percentage of pupils getting five grades A*-C. They said the system meant that schools were concentrating on those pupils who were capable of higher grades to

the detriment of those at the bottom of the heap.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said that the A*-C indicator should go. "The Government must radically reform the performance tables so that they... reflect the performance of all pupils, otherwise they will reinforce failure and increase an education underclass," he said.

Ministers have promised that this year's tables will include information which reflects the results of pupils of all abilities, but they made it clear

yesterday that they believed the five top grades were a useful indicator for parents.

Government sources pointed out that today's figures gave the failure rate for subject entries, not candidates. "We are concerned about pupils leaving school without qualifications but we are waiting to see how many pupils are involved."

Another explanation for the increasing number of failures may be that for the first time 16-year-olds have been compelled by law to stay at school until they have taken exams in June, instead of leaving at Easter.

Hill goes to become Great Pundit in the Sky



JIMMY HILL - to some an icon of football punditry, to others an irritation - is to desert the BBC after 25 years with scarcely a backward glance.

The commentator enjoyed massive exposure during the Beeb's coverage of the World Cup, but his contract came to an end on the same day as the final. He decided not to renew it and will join Sky Sports News. Mr Hill yesterday blamed his

BY JANE ROBINS Media Correspondent

move on the ever-decreasing number of important live matches on the BBC. The loss of rights to show Premiership matches and cup finals meant that Mr Hill's opportunities to opine were dwindling.

Asked whether he would miss the professionalism of the BBC's approach to football

coverage, Mr Hill responded with a blunt "No," adding that the main thing he will miss is his car parking space.

At 70, Mr Hill has been a TV pundit for 40 years, spending much of that time infuriating football fans with his know-it-all manner. In his new Sky programme *The Lost Word*, he will conduct lengthy interviews with sportsmen and women, mainly footballers, hoping to

coax "diamonds" from them in a relaxed atmosphere.

"Without being rude," he says, "footballers are not the best talkers in the world."

"I might go beyond football and ask them what they think of Great Britain today, as a country. And what do they think of hooligans? I'll ask them if they think they might have been a hooligan if they were not a footballer."

On his own career, Mr Hill is philosophical. Starting out as a player for Fulham, then becoming manager of Coventry City, he next moved to London Weekend Television as Head of Sport. He says he liked playing best and it has been downhill from then on - finishing up with punditry. He is coy about the rewards of the new job, but says it "will pay enough to pay the milkman".

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Michael Atherton is
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GCSE Results



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Dobson hails NHS waiting list fall

The first good news on NHS waiting lists since the election was greeted by a fusillade of allegations, warnings and criticisms. Page 5

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Half of all social workers think paedophiles should be held in prison indefinitely until they are judged no longer a risk to children, according to new research. Page 8

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Congo fighting reaches Kinshasa

Panic rippled through Kinshasa yesterday as the sound of heavy artillery rumbled through the air as government and rebel forces fought in the outskirts of the city. Page 10

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Ordnance factories under threat

British Aerospace may have to close down its Royal Ordnance ammunition division, putting more than 4,000 jobs at risk. Page 13

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James named as Ryder captain

Mark James has been officially named as the Ryder Cup captain for next September's meeting with the United States in Boston. Page 21

THURSDAY REVIEW

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David Aaronovitch

For my money, ome Mo Mowlam is worth a hundred Cruise missiles. When it comes to saving babies and marginalising terrorism, she's far more accurate. Page 3

David Anderson

The African renaissance may be coming, but it will not be delivered by the likes of Laurent Kabila. Page 5

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Family holiday blown apart by terrorist bomb

BY MARY BRAD
In Johannesburg
and KATHY MARES

THE GIDDINGS family, from the New Forest, flew to South Africa to see the famed Namaqualand flowers that blanket the Western Cape for a brief but magical spell in the spring.

Yesterday, three generations of the family were lying in hospital in Cape Town, including eight-year-old Laura Giddings, whose foot was amputated after an explosion ripped through the Planet Hollywood restaurant, on the fashionable Waterfront complex, killing one and injuring 27.

Laura's three-year-old brother, Jacob, was with her in intensive care at City Park Hospital. His spine was severely damaged by a blast so strong that it momentarily lifted the roof off the restaurant.

Yesterday afternoon their mother, Mandy, 35, was undergoing surgery. Their father, Tony, 38, who runs a family timber firm in Southampton, and grandfather, Brian, 65, were operated on earlier in the day.

All three adults suffered shrapnel wounds to their legs after a device, thought to be a home-made pipe bomb, exploded in the bar area as they were waiting to be seated. The restaurant visit was intended as a treat for Laura and Jacob.

The five were said to be seriously ill, but stable. Only Iris Giddings, the children's 65-year-old grandmother, was unhurt.

Yesterday, speaking from a hotel in Cape Town, she said: "We had just arrived and were being shown to our seats when the whole place was torn apart. There was a flash and then everything went dark as the ceilings and walls seemed to come down upon us."

"I was knocked down and saw my family all lying injured before me. It was one of the worst things I could imagine seeing. There was absolute chaos."

It was Iris and Brian Giddings who persuaded the younger couple to holiday in South Africa with their children. Mrs Giddings said they had been captivated by its "tremendous natural beauty" and by "welcoming and obliging" locals on previous trips. "We wanted to show them just what it was like," she added.

They were ten days into a three-week holiday and had been staying in a rented villa, visiting the countryside around Cape Town.

Jill McCreath, 69, the next-door neighbour, of Tony and



A medic carries Jacob Giddings from the scene of the blast which tore through the restaurant

Obed Zikwa

Mandy Giddings in their home village of Bramshaw, near Southampton, said: "To think that a little girl has been maimed for life is absolutely appalling."

"They are lovely children from a close-knit family who are very much part of the community."

One of Tony Giddings' brothers, Robert, was preparing to fly to Cape Town last night. Yesterday Planet Hollywood, an unabashed celebration of all things American, was cordoned off by barbed wire while South African police and American FBI agents searched for clues.

Witnesses described the appalling scenes that greeted them after the explosion. The manager of a neighbouring restaurant said that black smoke was billowing from

the front door when he arrived. "People were shrieking, everyone was shellshocked, standing around with their hands over their faces," he said.

Some wondered what sort of person strolls into a restaurant crowded with laughing people, past the glitzy foyer with the framed portrait of its US film star founders Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone and Bruce Willis, and

coolly places a bag containing a bomb on the floor. Fanie Schoeman, 50, one of 20 people from the city's Standard Bank who were holding a farewell party in Planet Hollywood for a colleague, lost both his legs and died soon after reaching hospital.

His wife, Antoinette, was among the injured, and another bank employee was fighting for his life yesterday.

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Sykes 'could harm Tories'

BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

PRO-EUROPEAN Tory MPs yesterday warned that millionaire businessman Paul Sykes' campaign against the euro could cause serious damage to the Conservative Party.

Ian Taylor, MP for Esher and Walton and a leading member of Michael Heseltine's Conservative Mainstream group, said that Mr Sykes' multi-million pound campaign was to be avoided.

Mr Taylor made his remarks as former MP Tony Marlow confirmed that independent anti-federalists were to stand against pro-euro Tories in next year's European elections.

The Independent revealed yesterday that Mr Sykes intended to launch a huge publicity blitz to persuade the public to vote No in any referendum on the single currency.

Mr Taylor, who will be joined by Mr Heseltine and former Chancellor Kenneth Clarke at pro-Europe fringe meeting at next month's party conference, said that he disagreed strongly with Mr Sykes' campaign.

"It will cause damage. Damage to his wealth and to the Conservative Party and we have to keep well away from him," he said.

"We must distance ourselves from it. It is precisely this sort of campaign that makes me so concerned about the direction of the party... I'm much more worried about his message and the collateral damage it will do to the party."

However, Mr Marlow said that Mr Sykes' campaign sounded like "splendid news" and said a slate of independent candidates in next year's European elections would gather significant public support.

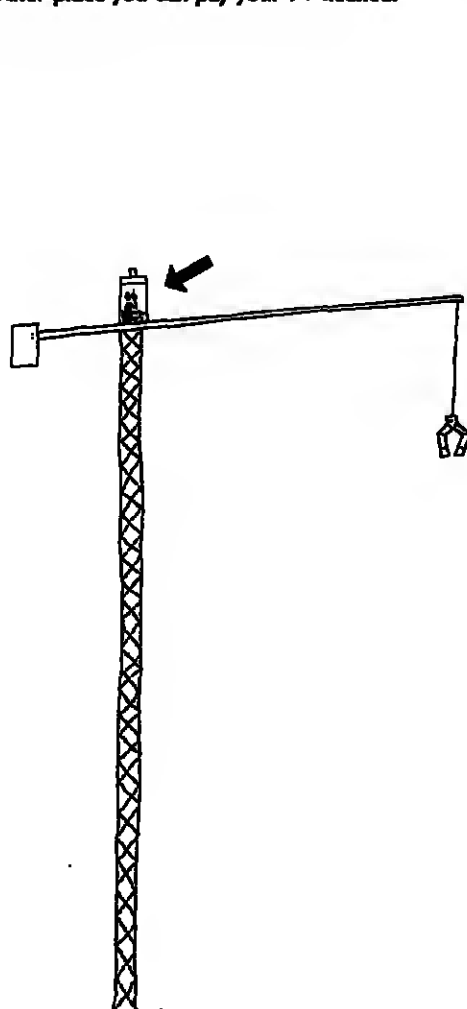
He said: "Europe is the supreme issue of British politics. We will have European elections next year where none of the three main parties will tackle the issue of Europe itself."

"With the elections fought on the basis of proportional representation, candidates who stand firmly against the single currency are likely to gain."

Mr Marlow and fellow former Tory MP Nicholas Budgen have been threatened with expulsion from the party if they stand as independents.

Brian Sedgmore, Labour MP for Hackney South and Shoreditch, said: "The economic and political forces behind the euro are too powerful for the likes of Mr Sykes and Mr Rupert Murdoch to be deflected by extremist, ignorant hysteria."

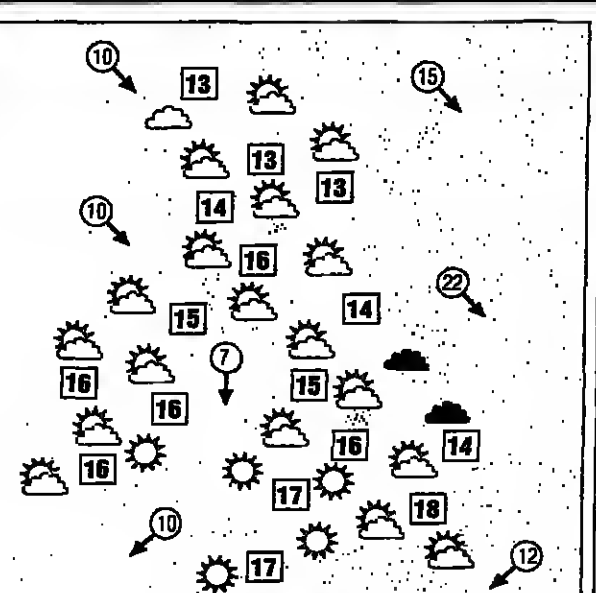
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BRITAIN TODAY



FORECAST

General situation Eastern coasts of England will be dull and drizzly, but skies will brighten for the afternoon with sunny spells, although it will remain chilly. Elsewhere around the UK it will be mainly dry with sunny spells, but the odd afternoon shower may occur over the mountains and north-west Scotland is likely to see thickening cloud later.

London, E & SE England, E Anglia: Dull, cool and drizzly towards eastern coasts; later drier and brighter. Some decent sunny breaks away from coasts. A light northerly wind. Max temp 16-19C (61-66F).

East S England, Midlands: Sunny spells and dry. A light north-west wind. Max temp 16-19C (61-66F).

Wales, S Wales: Sunny spells with only the occasional shower on the hills. A light north-west wind. Max temp 15-18C (59-64F).

Channel Is, SW England, Wales: Plenty of sunshine and small amounts of rain. A light north-east wind. Max temp 17-20C (63-68F).

Cent W & NE England: Sunny spells inland but duller towards the coast with some morning drizzle. A light north-west wind. Max temp 14-17C (57-63F).

N Ireland: Plenty of sunshine. A light north-west wind. Max temp 15-17C (59-63F).

NW Scotland, W Wales: Sunny spells but showery calm later. A light north-west wind. Max temp 14-15C (57-59F).

SW, SE & NE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, N Wales: Sunny spells and the odd hill shower. A light north-west wind. Max temp 14-17C (57-63F), cooler in the far north.

OUTLOOK

A lot of cloud in Scotland and Northern Ireland on Friday with rain in places; dry elsewhere with sunny spells. Drizzle possible in the north and towards east coasts; otherwise dry with sunny spells on Saturday.

TRAVEL

Roads: London: M1/A12 link road. Various roadworks in place. Until 31st December 1999. West Midlands: M5 between J5 (Stamford) and J7 (Stoughton). New road layout with a 50mph speed limit in a new half-mile carriageway during road works. Until 30th November. Bristol: M5 J16-18. Major Roadworks on Avonmouth Bridge. Until 1st January 2001. AA Roadwatch: Call 0334 401777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

LIGHTING UP

Belfast	8.28pm	to	6.23am
Birmingham	8.07pm	to	6.11am
Bristol	8.08pm	to	6.1am
Glasgow	8.25pm	to	6.13am
London	7.59pm	to	6.06am
Manchester	8.11pm	to	6.11am
Newcastle	8.12pm	to	6.05am

HIGH TIDES

	AM	HT	PM	HT
Amersfoort	11.01	12.0	11.12	11.9
Blackpool	2.39	8.5	2.57	8.2
Cork	9.24	4.3	9.44	4.2
Den Haag	3.14	9	3.33	3.7
Falmouth	8.54	5.0	9.07	5.0
Flushing	11.08	4.14	11.21	4.22
Glasgow	4.10	3.5	4.45	3.2
Hull	10.05	8.3	10.28	8.0
Liverpool	2.51	8.9	3.08	8.5
Millport	10.01	3	10.15	6.9
Newquay	8.55	6.3	9.09	6.3
Penzance	8.24	5.0	8.38	5.0
Porthcawl	12.15	4.4	12.30	4.4
Portland	10.37	1.6	10.42	1.6
Purcell	11.53	4.3	12.08	4.4
Scarborough	2.48	5.5	2.57	5.2
Southampton	2.26	4.3	2.42	4.3
Sunderland	1.48	1.8	1.48	1.8
Wick	2.59	3.3	3.21	3.1

Height measured in metres

AIR QUALITY

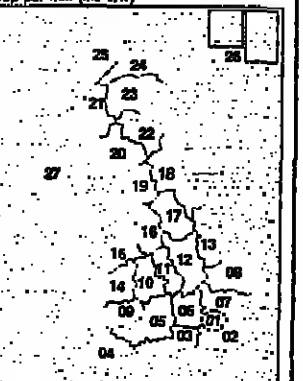
	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}	O ₃
London	Good	Good	Good
S England	Good	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good	Good
C England	Good	Good	Good
N England	Good	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good	Good

SUN & MOON

Sun rises:	06.05
Sun sets:	19.59
Moon rises:	11.33
Moon sets:	22.18
First Quarter:	Aug 30

WEATHERLINE

For the latest forecasts dial 0891 9009 followed by the two digits for your area. Source: The Met. Office. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).



YESTERDAY

Winnipeg: Christchurch 22C (72F)
Coldest: Adelaide 6C (43F)
Warmest: Coningsby 0.47 in
Sunniest: Isle of Man 10.4 hours

For 24hrs to 2pm Wednesday

	Sea	Rate	Max
Aburdeen	9.5	0	14
Adelaide	2.4	0.13	17
Amsterdam	8.2	0	14
Belfast	1.9	0.13	18
Birmingham	4.1	0	12
Bournemouth	11.7	0	21
Bristol	5.1	0.01	19
Buenos Aires	7.2	0.01	14
Cardiff	2.7	0.01	19
Canton	8.4	0	12
Cebu	2.7	0.01	18
Edinburgh	5.2	0	16
Essex	6.8	0.01	19
Flushing	3.8	0.01	18
Folkestone	10.7	0	20
Glasgow	3.4	0.01	16
Hamburg	9.3	0	20
Hong Kong	8.8	0	19
Hove	2.4	0.25	17
Isle of Man	13.0	0.01	18
Isle of Wight	12.3	0	20
Jersey	12.3	0	20
London	9.6	0	11
Liverpool	2.8	0	20
Lowestoft	4.6	0.01	17
Manchester	1.9	0.06	15
Maracaibo	2.5	0.09	15
Morecambe	2.7	0	17
Newcastle	2.6	0.01	17
Northwich	8.4	0.01	20
Oxford	6.6	0.01	20
Ros-on-sea	7.2	0.01	21
Salcombe	1.8	0.01	15
Scarborough	2.5	0.01	12
Sheerness	8.3	0	20
Southport	0.7	0.07	16
Stornoway	4.9	0.01	13
Sunderland	11.0	0	20
Torquay	2.9	0.07	18
Torquay	7.3	0.01	19
Winnipeg	11.0	0	16
Winnipeg	11.0	0	16

24 hours to 6pm (GMT) Tuesday

Information by FA WeatherCentre

RAIN OR SHINE

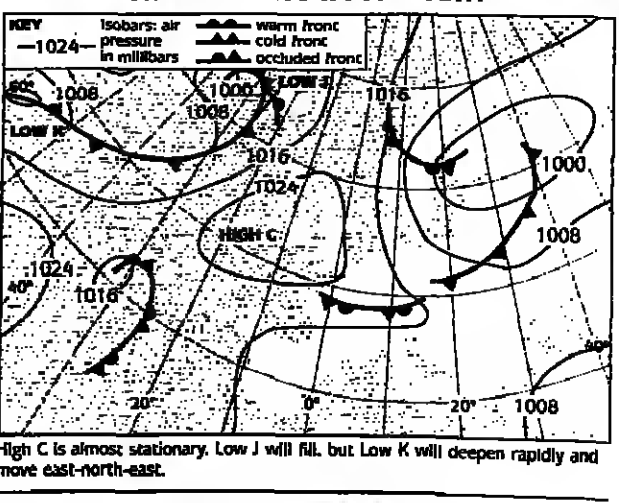
SUPERMARKET CHAIN Sainsbury has teamed up with the Met Office to make sure it will always be prepared for sudden demand in ice creams, lollies and other seasonal products.

The Met Office will provide short and medium-term weather forecasts tailored to groups of stores, giving warnings. Sainsbury's strategists can increase availability of weather-linked goods such as deodorants, salads and barbecue charcoal.

THE WORLD



THE ATLANTIC NOON TODAY

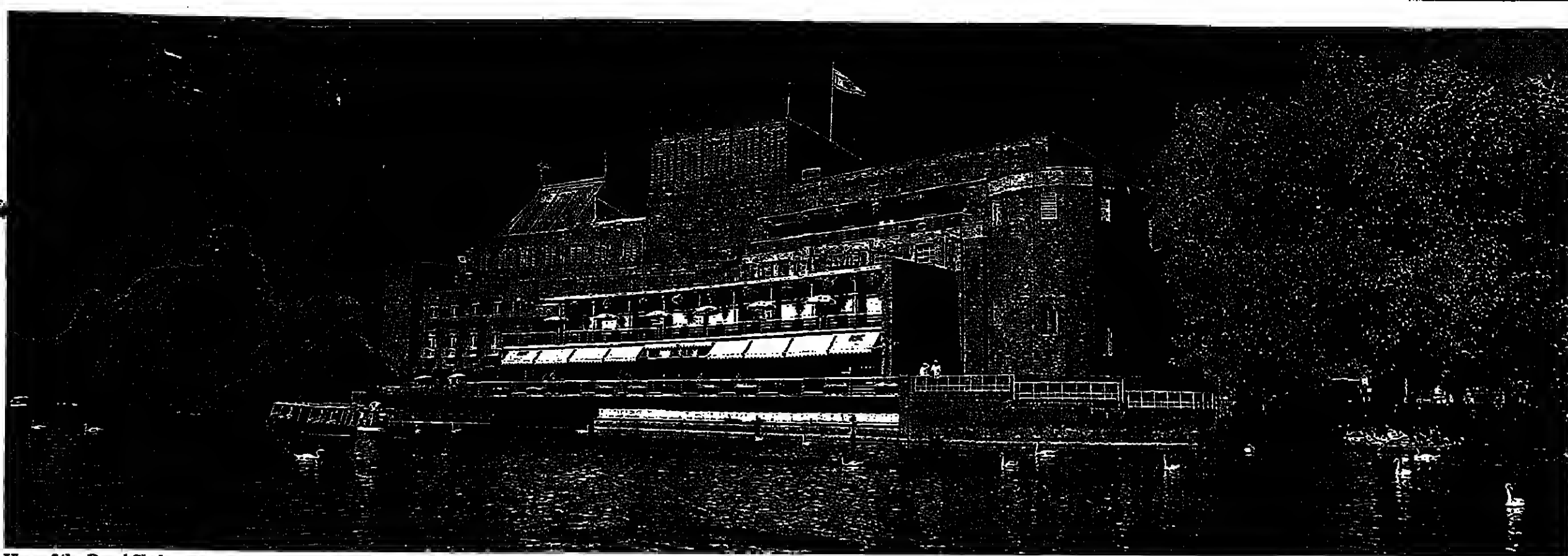


High C is almost stationary. Low J will fill, but Low K will deepen rapidly and move east-north-east.

THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Abidjan	18	64	Cairo	28	82	Harbin	1	34
Algeria	24	75	Chong	28	82	Shanghai	29	84
Amsterdam	12	54	Dakar	28	82	Singapore	29	84
Ankara	18	64	Delhi	34	93	Sofia	31	88
Bahia	24	75	Durham	24	75	St Petersburg	18	64
Bahia	24	75	Edinburgh	12	54	Stockholm	13	55
Bahia	24	75	Essex	12	54	Sydney	16	61
Bahia	24	75	Falmouth	12	54	Taipei	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Flushing	12	54	Tokyo	25	77
Bahia	24	75	Glasgow	12	54	Toronto	25	77
Bahia	24	75	Hamburg	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Hong Kong	28	82	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Isle of Man	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Jersey	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	London	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Liverpool	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Lowestoft	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Manchester	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Maracaibo	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Morecambe	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Newcastle	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Northwich	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Oxford	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Ros-on-sea	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Salcombe	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Scarborough	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Sheerness	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Southport	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82
Bahia	24	75	Stornoway	12	54	Ulaanbaatar	28	82

150/11/1998



View of the Royal Shakespeare Company's theatre from across the River Avon (above). John Gielgud (below) plays Shylock in the Merchant of Venice during the RSC's hey day in the 1940s Robert Harding Picture Library

RSC plan to demolish Stratford

BY DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

THEATRE LOVERS and tourists from around the world have gathered at the Royal Shakespeare Company's theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon for nearly 70 years. But now, if the RSC gets its way, the building on the banks of the Avon is to be bulldozed and a new, more modern theatre put in its place.

A £2 million lottery application submitted by the RSC seeks money to explore options for redevelopment.

No mention is made of replacing the theatre in its entirety. But *The Independent* has learnt that the RSC director, Adrian Noble, has begun talks with the Dutch architect Erick van Egeraat on the construction of a new theatre.

The Royal Shakespeare is steeped in tradition. Leading actors of every generation have appeared there. Many seminal productions, such as Sir Peter Hall's *Wors of the Roses*, had their first performances on the RSC stage.

Recently, landmark productions have been fewer, though the late Sir Robert Stephens' career was resurrected when he was cast by Adrian Noble to play *King Lear* in 1993.

His performance illuminated the stage and won awards. The theatre also has a unique architectural history. Its architect, Elisabeth Scott, was the first woman to design

a theatre. The 1932 Art Deco building was designed to resemble an ocean liner when viewed from the other side of the Avon, and it still does, particularly when lit up at night.

It has splendid views over the river with an atmospheric coffee bar and terrace on the water's edge.

But in recent years the 1,500-seat theatre has been increasingly unpopular with directors, actors and audiences, who all prefer the smaller mock Elizabethan Swan Theatre next door. One performance of *Twelfth Night* at the main theatre earlier this year was a staggering 90 per cent empty.

Ian Rowley, an RSC spokesman, confirmed last night that Mr Noble plans to demolish the theatre, though the inside of the Grade II listed foyer would probably remain. But the famous riverside "ocean liner" effect of the theatre would be altered forever.

Mr Rowley said: "There are numerous problems with the building. It's austere and very unwelcoming. The most exciting and most pragmatic thing for us to do would be to create a new theatre, a more egalitarian space where every seat in the house has good acoustics and good sightlines."

"At present the theatre is too big, the stage and auditorium are all wrong, and the balcony, which contains a third of the audience, starts at the back of the



stalls. You're miles away. No modern theatre would be built like that. Schoolchildren having their first experience of Shakespeare can't see or hear properly, and they have to enter through a different door."

Mr Rowley added that a new theatre, which the company hopes to start building in the next five years, would be in the same prime spot by the river, but in addition to changes in the auditorium there would be better access to the riverside and a much bigger front of house with an information centre, meeting rooms and performance space.

Yesterday the actor David

Calder, who is playing Prospero in *The Tempest* at the RSC, said: "You try and get the voice up to the back of the gods here. It's very difficult. The relationship between the stage and the auditorium is poor, and backstage the most you can have is four separate people having separate dressing rooms and that can get on your nerves."

Clare Holman, who is playing Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, said: "It's a very difficult theatre to play. It's a declamatory theatre. The auditorium is not embracing. It's very square and it's difficult to receive an audience reaction. There should be a circle of

the local environment. Mr Van Egeraat tends to work with glass and natural materials.

The present building replaced the Shakespeare memorial Theatre, a Victorian gothic building, which burnt down in 1926. Every decade has seen the finest performers of their generation star in the RST — Donald Wolfit, Paul Scofield, Peggy Ashcroft, John Gielgud, Laurence Olivier, Michael Redgrave, Richard Burton, Judi Dench, Ian McKellen, Diana Rigg, Helen Mirren and Kenneth Branagh.

Disaffection with the theatre building appears to be recent. It thrived in the Sixties and Seventies with productions such as Sir Peter Hall's *Wors of the Roses* with Peggy Ashcroft, Ian Holm and David Warner, and Peter Brook's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* set in a white box with the fairy king making his entrance on a trapeze.

The RSC said yesterday that no rebuilding work was likely to start until after the year 2000, and the space occupied by the RST would definitely be again occupied by a theatre.

GREATEST PERFORMANCES



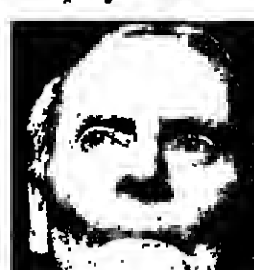
Dame Peggy Ashcroft — a mentor and role model for younger actresses



Sir Peter Hall created the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1960



Paul Robeson played Othello opposite Peggy Ashcroft's Desdemona



Sir Laurence Olivier — appeared as Corinthus and also as Macbeth

Chaucer always meant to clean up Wife of Bath

THE WIFE of Bath, one of the most famous women in English literature, was never meant to be the slutty character portrayed in modern versions of *The Canterbury Tales*.

A scientific analysis of the Wife of Bath's Prologue has revealed that Geoffrey Chaucer changed his mind about a key passage in the tale that has blackened the lady's character for ever.

The passage, where the Wife of Bath says she satisfies her sexual appetite with whatever man she can, was meant to have been deleted from a working draft of *The Canterbury Tales* but was instead copied into subsequent manuscripts after Chaucer had died.

The 26 lines in the passage turned the Wife of Bath into a "monster of carnality" according to scholars, but Chaucer had a change of heart over his

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

original description of her character, say scientists.

Chaucer's own manuscript, written at the end of the 14th century, has long been lost, so



Chaucer: Changing story

scientists analysed the 88 manuscripts from the 15th century for clues about the original wording.

The team, from the universities of Cambridge, Sheffield and De Montfort, employed computers normally used to study the evolutionary relationships between animal species to study the manuscripts, and, in particular, the 58 medieval copies of the Wife of Bath's Prologue.

In research published in the journal *Nature*, the scientists say they can construct a family tree showing which manuscripts were closest to the original.

"In the process of copying, the scribes made changes that were themselves copied," said Dr Christopher Howe, lecturer in biochemistry at Cambridge.

Dr Peter Robinson, head of the *Canterbury Tales* Project at De Montfort University, said

the study suggested Chaucer's own copy was not a finished version but a working draft with alternative sections added later.

Some scribes chose to copy one version, others another, Dr Robinson said. Chaucer had almost certainly meant to delete the 26 lines referring to the Wife of Bath's sexual proclivities but died before this was done, he added.

"The Wife of Bath is the single best-known character in Chaucer and is the key to understanding medieval women. Whether you have the 26 lines or not makes an enormous difference to how she is viewed. We think Chaucer thought it gave an over-the-top picture of her and took it out, but some of the scribes left it in," he said.

"Every modern school text includes these 26 lines and everyone has a picture of the Wife of Bath that is not right."

Suspect named in Bahamas' murders

THE BAHAMAS authorities have identified a suspect in the recent murders of a British and an American woman on the Paradise Island resort. They have asked the Canadian police and Interpol for help in the hunt for a French-Canadian construction worker.

Concerned about the impact of the murders on the island's tourist trade, and responding to criticism that the local police force has failed to investigate properly, the Bahamas have called in Scotland Yard, the FBI and Miami police.

BY PHIL DAVISON
in Nassau

In a rare news conference, the Prime Minister, Hubert Ingraham, said police want to question the Canadian, named by other sources as Philippe Desroisiers, 23, in connection with last week's murder of Joanne Clarke — a 24-year-old Briton, and the killing in July of the American Lori Fogelman, 32.

He said Ms Fogelman was sharing a room with the Canadian and another man at the Holiday Inn on the island before

she disappeared on 27 July. She had previously known Mr Desroisiers in her home state of Virginia. After he reported her missing, the Canadian was "extensively" questioned by police but left the country last Friday, the day Ms Clarke is thought to have been strangled, Mr Ingraham said. He said police found the timing of the Canadian's departure "suspicious".

Mr Desroisiers had apparently been working on the construction of the luxury Atlantis resort on Paradise Island. There are hundreds of foreign

workers at the site, now closely watched by police and private security agents.

The Prime Minister was at pains to suggest there was no Bahamian serial killer at large.

Mr Ingraham said autopsies on the two bodies would be carried out today. Ms Clarke's shorts had been partially pulled down and her swimsuit torn, he said. Her body was found in shrub behind Cabbage Beach last Saturday. Ms Fogelman's body, found later the same day a few yards away, was naked and hurried in a shallow grave.

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- (b) Mystic Meg
- (c) Your bank manager
- (d) You

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Libya stalls on Lockerbie

BY PAUL LASHMAR

COLONEL Muammar Gaddafi played for time yesterday, on whether to hand over the two Libyans suspected of planting the Lockerbie bomb.

The Libyan government was due to give its response to the Anglo-American proposals for a trial in The Hague under Scottish law. But, instead, Libya sent a letter to the United Nations saying that they wanted more time to study the terms.

"Libya is anxious to arrive at a settlement of this dispute and to turn over a new page in its relations with the states concerned," said the letter from Ramadan Barge, Libya's chargé d'affaires at the UN in New York.

The letter, the first official reaction from Tripoli, said that Libya's legal authorities had asked for international experts "more familiar with the laws of the states" to help them.

Two Libyan suspects - Ali Basset al-Megrahi and Al-Amin Khalfia Fhima - are accused of planting a bomb aboard the Pan Am Flight 103, which exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, killing 270 people.

Colonel Gaddafi is clearly worried that Libya is being



Gaddafi: Playing for time

bounced into a decision by well-orchestrated diplomacy from the West.

Libya is coming under enormous pressure, even from the Arab League, to accept the deal.

The new Anglo-American proposals go a long way to meet the Libyan terms but a number of issues are still unresolved. The Libyans have stipulated that they wanted an international panel of judges, but the proposal offers only a Scottish panel of judges. The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, has said that the terms "are not negotiable".

UN sanctions are being used

as the carrot and stick for Libya's acceptance.

Britain and America have already tabled a resolution suspending UN sanctions against Libya as soon as the two suspects were extradited to Holland.

Tripoli has asked the United Nations Security Council to put off endorsing the plan until the Libyan government has had an opportunity to examine it further.

The fact that the Libyans sent the letter suggested that Colonel Gaddafi's regime was keen to resolve the 10-year-old terrorist case in which Pan Am Flight 103 was bombed out of the sky. Semtex explosive had been packed inside a Toshiba cassette player, itself placed inside a Samsonite case and placed aboard the flight.

"Libya is anxious to arrive at a settlement of this dispute and to turn over a new page in its relations with the states concerned," it stated.

The letter said that the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, needed more time to provide Libya with assistance.

In London, the Foreign Office said that it saw no need to delay the Security Council resolution.



Campbell Aird, 47, shows off what is believed to be the world's most advanced bionic arm after being fitted with the device yesterday. The hotelier from Dumfriesshire, whose right arm was amputated due to cancer 16 years ago, has pledged to go paragliding next week. Colin McPherson

Snake venom gives hope for breast cancer

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

VENOM FROM a poisonous American snake contains a protein that in animal experiments virtually halts the spread of breast cancer to other tissues, scientists have found.

The protein, extracted from the venom of the Copperhead viper, slowed the growth of tumours in mice implanted with human breast cancer cells by up to 70 per cent.

But its most dramatic effect was in controlling metastasis - the frequently lethal spread of cancer to different parts of the body. Here, the protein reduced the spread of the cancerous cells to the lungs by 90 per cent compared to a control group.

Dr Francis Markland, a biochemist in charge of a team at the University of Southern California School of Medicine, said yesterday that the new treatment could be tested on human patients in the "not too distant future". That will be an important test, since many "cures"

for cancer which have shown remarkable promise in laboratory animals, particularly rats and mice, have been disappointing in human trials.

But the Californian team appears to be confident. In March an unnamed group filed a US patent for the use of the protein, called contortrostatin, in "bio-affecting" drugs.

The Copperhead grows to about three feet long and has a distinctive copper head and reddish brown bands. Although poisonous, its bite is rarely fatal.

Contortrostatin, when applied to tumour cells, does not kill them but appears to put them in "suspended animation", said Dr Markland. The cancer cells are prevented from adhering to and invading the healthy surrounding cells.

IN BRIEF

Nike ultimatum on sale of shirts

THE NIKE sportswear firm issued an ultimatum over what it claims are fakes being sold in the Savacentre chain store. It said Savacentre was stocking counterfeit polo shirts; Savacentre said the matter was being discussed and that a statement would be issued later.

Age is the key to healthy sperm

A NATURAL process that safeguards sperm cells by screening them for genetic fitness before they mature appears to break down with age, say researchers at the University of Texas. This may explain why children of older fathers are more likely to suffer birth defects.

Meeting crime victims pays off

YOUNG OFFENDERS who meet their victims and pay compensation are less likely to reoffend, said Northamptonshire Diversion Unit. Young people accused of theft and assault had a reoffending rate of 35 per cent, compared with 80 per cent for those locked up.

Slimmer died after staple surgery

A SLIMMER died after a stomach-reduction operation went wrong, a Cardiff inquest heard. Marilyn Williams had her stomach stapled but fell ill and during a second operation it was found the stomach lining was torn, causing peritonitis. A verdict of misadventure was recorded.

Boy dies in quad bike accident

SAMUEL GREGG, aged five, died in hospital after an accident on a quad bike that he was riding with his father, William James Gregg, in Cornwall. The four-wheeled machine overturned on a steep incline at Chapel Farm, St Dominick, near Callington.

Estate agent stole from clients

AN ESTATE agent admitted five charges of stealing valuables from flats in his care in west London to fund his heroin addiction. Sentence was adjourned on Matthew Parsons, 32, at Knightsbridge Crown Court.

Talks fail in firefighters' dispute

TALKS AIMED at ending the three-month-long Essex firefighters' dispute ended without agreement last night. Up to 1,000 members of the Fire Brigades Union will strike again today in a protest over 16 job losses.

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July 11, 1998

Officers quizzed on fatal shooting

FOUR OF Britain's most senior police officers are being investigated over their conduct following the shooting of an unarmed man.

In an unprecedented move, Paul Whitehouse, Chief Constable of Sussex, and three of his most senior colleagues, are to be interviewed by officers from another force.

The inquiry follows the death of James Ashley, 39, who was shot in the chest by a police officer during an early-morning raid last January at his flat in Hastings, East Sussex. He was naked and had been in bed with a girlfriend when the shooting took place.

The morning after the shooting, which happened at about 4am, Mr Whitehouse backed the operation and said that the officers had been investigating drugs-trafficking and the attempted murder of a man stabbed outside a pub in Hastings. He said that the man they were after was considered "armed and dangerous".

In an extremely unusual move the Police Complaints Authority later issued a statement saying that Mr Ashley, far from being a murder suspect, had pulled the assailant off the victim and prevented a murder.

The solicitor for the family of Mr Ashley complained that the dead man's reputation had been "blackened" by Sussex police.

No gun was found in Mr Ashley's room and just a tiny amount of cannabis was discovered.

Mr Ashley was jailed for two years for manslaughter in 1992. He has no convictions for drugs dealing.

Caroline Courtland-Smith,

BY JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

the 19-year-old art student who was in the bedroom at the time of the shooting, has since suffered a breakdown and has left college. She is to sue Sussex police for damages.

Claims for damages are also expected to be made on behalf of Mr Ashley's 14-year-old son, James, who lives in Liverpool.

Sir John Hoddinott, Chief Constable of Hampshire, is leading an inquiry into the "conduct of chief officers in the aftermath of the shooting of James Ashley".

As well as Mr Whitehouse, his Deputy Chief Constable Mark Jordan, and Assistant Chief Constables Nigel Yeo and Maria Wallis are to be questioned.

Sir John's final report, expected to be completed in a few months, will be sent to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), which will consider whether charges should be brought. Any disciplinary action will be considered later.

Five officers who were involved in the raid have been suspended and were accused at the opening of Mr Ashley's inquest of "misrepresenting" intelligence leading to the operation.

A separate inquiry by Kent police into the officers' actions is nearing completion and will be sent to the CPS for a decision on whether criminal charges should be brought.

This is believed to be the first time the four most senior officers of a force have been the subject of an investigation.



Matthew Williams, age 11, in one of the trees threatened by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's road plans

Peter Macdiarmid

Judge allows boy protester to carry on living in threatened tree house

AN 11-YEAR-OLD boy known to his friends as General Survival appeared at the High Court yesterday to appeal against an eviction order on the tree home in which he lives.

Matthew Williams was not allowed to speak at the hearing because of his age, but fellow eco-warriors spoke on his behalf at the hearing, before Mr Justice Auld.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council had won an eviction order against the 20 protesters who moved into a park in the centre of Epsom after plans

BY DIANA BALMORIS
were agreed to fell trees for a major road scheme.

Following yesterday's decision the eco-warriors will be able to stay in the tree houses in the Silver Birches until after the Appeal Court makes a decision at a hearing on 1 October. Mr Justice Auld said he was granting leave "in the interests of justice" because it was possible that the eco-warriors had a case to argue.

Matthew arrived at court with shoulder-length hair be-

neath a military hat and camouflage trousers and jacket.

Afterwards he said: "It was really boring. I was not allowed to say anything. I wanted to tell him how much I love the green park and how much I want to save the Silver Birches."

"All my friends come to play with me there and I don't want that to come to an end because the trees have all been chopped down to make a road."

Matthew lives with his mother Lorraine and brother Luke, 14, in the tree house. He dropped out of school when he

was eight and cannot read or write. Although Matthew only celebrated his 11th birthday last week he is a veteran eco-warrior having been present at high-profile protests at Kingston and Crystal Palace.

His mother Lorraine said: "Our way of life might seem strange to some people but I don't think it is doing any harm to anyone, least of all my children. All of us at the site believe in what we are doing. Matthew understands the value of the park, as a place everyone should be able to enjoy."

Nigel Veal, 37, an English graduate from Epsom, is helping Matthew to learn to read and write. Mr Veal, who met Matthew when he took food to the protesters, said: "This is a public park which the council is trying to turn into a road scheme and destroy for ever."

He hoped to represent Matthew at the appeal as his legal guardian, when he would bring up the fact that Britain was a signatory to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, which decided children should have a say in environmental issues.

Dobson shrugs off NHS attack

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

THE FIRST good news on National Health Service waiting lists since the election was greeted with allegations, warnings and criticisms yesterday.

Releasing the latest figures, Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, said they showed a drop of 45,000 in the numbers waiting for treatment between 30 April and 31 July, the largest fall on record. "The supertanker has turned," he said.

The Tories accused him of fiddling the figures. They claimed ruses included delaying the first consultation with a specialist so patients take longer to reach the official waiting list, refusing operations such as varicose veins on the NHS and "culling" the lists - asking patients if they wish to remain on them and giving them only a short time to respond. Mr Dobson replied that he was doing nothing that they had not themselves done.

The Liberals claimed so many staff were abandoning the supertanker it was in danger of being left rudderless, while Union, which NHS union, warned it would run aground unless the Government delivered higher pay and less stress for nurses.

The British Medical Association, whose members are enjoying overtime rates of up to £900 per half day session to clear the lists, said short-term blitzes were "a very expensive way" of cutting the queues.

The Institute of Health Services Management claimed it was a team effort that had brought the lists down and that managers' role had been "unfairly derided". The NHS Confederation, the only organisation to declare the achievement in cutting the lists an unqualified success, said it had been brought about by "the sheer hard work of NHS staff".

Leading article, Review, page 3

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Maths failures more than double

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

RESULTS FOR about 600,000 GCSE candidates released today show that mathematics standards are slipping. While the percentage of candidates getting top grades is up overall, in maths it is down.

The proportion of candidates failing maths is also up from 2.1 to 5.2 per cent - a bigger increase than for any other subject.

Baroness Blackstone, the education minister, said: "I am pleased that entries and attainment have held up well in science. But I am disappointed that the proportion of higher grades A*-C in the equally important subject of mathematics has declined slightly."

"This highlights the need already identified by the Government for a greater focus on the teaching and learning of numerical and mathematical skills in schools."

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, said: "The overall decline in the performance in mathematics is very worrying. It obviously reflects the difficulty in recruiting good mathematicians to teaching and provides a vivid illustration of how poor pay prospects for teachers lead to poor performance by pupils."

By contrast, the proportion getting at least a C grade in English has risen slightly, although the failure rate also showed a small increase.

Lady Blackstone welcomed the increase in GCSE entries -



The GCSE results have led to renewed calls for a greater focus on maths teaching in schools Patrick Ramsey

up 2.1 per cent. "But we are not complacent," she said. "Far more young people have the potential to do well in school."

This year's candidates were the first to take the exam since Sir Ron Dearing's review of the national curriculum was acted upon. Entries for history and geography, which have become optional, have declined slightly and those for the now compulsory design and technology and foreign languages are up.

For the first time, pupils could take short courses which are of the same academic standard as a full GCSE. Exam boards say the short courses in religious education are proving particularly popular. New syllabuses were also introduced for most subjects.

Dr Ron McLane, secretary of the Joint Council for the GCSE, said: "This is the tenth anniversary of GCSEs. Over those 10 years the examination

has successfully unlocked the potential of a growing number of young people and stimulated their interest in learning."

The proportion of entries awarded the top three grades has risen steadily since the exam's introduction, although the rise has been less steep in recent years. This year, 54.7 per cent achieved grades A*-C.

The fall in the overall pass rate is only the second since the exam began.

Theresa May, a Conservative education spokeswoman, said the previous government deserved credit for helping to raise standards and for the increase in the number of pupils achieving the higher grades.

The number of candidates taking part in GNVQs, the vocational equivalent of GCSE, more than doubled this year.

David Blunkett, Review, page 4

HOW THE SUBJECTS COMPARE

provisional GCSE results, June 1998
(figures in brackets are the equivalent provisional figures for 1997)

Subject	Number sat	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Art (1)	206,781 (221,543)	6.8 (5.5)	13.3 (13.1)	19.1 (17.9)	24.2 (25.5)	15.9 (18.0)	10.7 (11.4)	6.4 (6.8)	2.8 (2.9)	0.7 (0.4)
Business Studies	102,462 (115,498)	2.6 (4)	6.6 (8.4)	14.6 (15.1)	26.2 (25.4)	18.8 (19.6)	13.0 (12.4)	5.0 (4.7)	1.2 (1.2)	1.5 (1.5)
Classical Civilisation	5,529 (3,644)	7.0 (6.9)	22.8 (21.2)	26.2 (24.0)	21.7 (20.5)	12.8 (10.1)	4.0 (4.0)	1.7 (1.7)	0.2 (0.2)	1.8 (1.8)
Design & Technology	385,057 (235,877)	2.3 (1.8)	9.1 (7.6)	14.3 (17.0)	23.4 (20.5)	19.6 (20.5)	14.4 (14.3)	4.1 (4.1)	0.2 (0.2)	2.8 (2.8)
Drama	83,090 (85,500)	3.9 (3.5)	16.2 (15.9)	25.7 (26.0)	23.6 (24.7)	15.3 (14.9)	8.2 (8.3)	4.0 (4.0)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Economics	7,430 (9,600)	3.8 (3.1)	13.2 (13.6)	21.9 (22.2)	24.6 (25.6)	12.5 (17.5)	6.3 (6.7)	4.0 (4.0)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
English	692,748 (645,559)	2.4 (2.0)	9.1 (8.7)	17.9 (18.8)	27.1 (26.5)	21.6 (22.1)	12.4 (12.4)	6.3 (6.3)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
English Literature	490,845 (492,678)	3.6 (2.8)	10.6 (10.9)	19.7 (21.8)	27.6 (28.1)	19.2 (18.5)	11.3 (11.0)	6.4 (6.4)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
French	335,888 (328,299)	4.3 (4.1)	11.9 (15.1)	19.9 (14.9)	18.6 (17.2)	14.2 (18.5)	11.3 (11.4)	6.4 (6.4)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Geography	265,573 (260,201)	4.6 (3.9)	12.2 (12.4)	16.5 (18.1)	22.6 (20.2)	18.1 (18.1)	12.4 (12.3)	6.3 (6.3)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
German	20,083 (132,615)	7.0 (5.7)	13.0 (16.3)	16.0 (15.4)	18.1 (18.9)	13.3 (18.0)	12.4 (12.1)	6.3 (6.3)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Greek	980 (971)	50.3 (50.7)	27.0 (26.2)	12.7 (11.5)	7.0 (7.1)	2.7 (3.1)	0.5 (0.5)	0.4 (0.4)	0.1 (0.1)	0.1 (0.1)
History	209,789 (227,447)	5.2 (4.3)	14.5 (13.3)	20.5 (20.5)	20.0 (20.0)	14.9 (14.9)	11.5 (11.5)	6.3 (6.3)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Home Economics	52,855 (104,863)	1.9 (1.8)	7.0 (7.0)	12.3 (14.9)	23.6 (19.7)	20.3 (20.7)	10.1 (11.1)	5.2 (5.2)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Humanities	23,267 (23,267)	2.0 (2.0)	7.0 (7.4)	13.6 (13.6)	18.9 (18.9)	18.9 (18.9)	10.1 (10.1)	5.2 (5.2)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Information Technology (1)	77,640 (76,043)	3.7 (2.8)	10.5 (9.5)	16.3 (20.4)	26.1 (24.4)	18.1 (18.1)	11.9 (12.3)	6.3 (6.3)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Latin	10,945 (11,673)	25.6 (26.8)	32.2 (32.9)	20.1 (20.5)	12.8 (11.7)	5.5 (5.1)	1.7 (1.7)	0.5 (0.5)	0.1 (0.1)	0.1 (0.1)
Mathematics	570,141 (681,265)	2.1 (2.1)	7.8 (7.5)	14.2 (14.6)	23.1 (23.1)	16.5 (16.5)	11.5 (11.5)	6.3 (6.3)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Music	42,069 (43,430)	8.4 (6.7)	19.5 (18.9)	22.6 (24.4)	19.3 (20.1)	12.1 (12.1)	9.3 (9.3)	5.0 (5.0)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Physical Education	90,334 (87,106)	3.7 (4.4)	10.1 (15.1)	17.5 (15.1)	20.0 (19.9)	24.4 (25.1)	15.2 (16.0)	6.3 (6.3)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Religious Studies	113,381 (118,545)	5.5 (4.9)	12.6 (12.0)	16.5 (18.7)	19.9 (21.0)	14.2 (15.0)	11.3 (11.7)	6.3 (6.3)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Science: Biology	47,523 (47,774)	11.1 (10.6)	26.1 (27.9)	26.8 (30.1)	21.4 (19.4)	14.9 (18.4)	10.1 (10.1)	5.2 (5.2)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Science: Chemistry	46,025 (45,797)	13.5 (13.7)	26.5 (21.8)	27.1 (29.4)	20.6 (21.9)	7.7 (7.4)	13.5 (13.5)	6.3 (6.3)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Science: Combined	1,006,151 (1,007,640)	3.3 (3.5)	7.6 (7.0)	12.6 (17.6)	25.2 (20.4)	21.7 (21.8)	15.4 (15.4)	8.2 (8.2)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Science: Physics	45,319 (44,852)	15.8 (13.6)	26.5 (22.7)	27.1 (29.4)	20.6 (20.6)	7.7 (7.5)	13.5 (13.5)	6.3 (6.3)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Social Science	3,327 (4,397)	1.1 (1.1)	4.6 (4.6)	12.4 (13.2)	21.7 (19.5)	19.0 (19.5)	12.2 (12.2)	6.3 (6.3)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Spanish	47,269 (48,826)	10.7 (10.4)	15.4 (15.5)	15.2 (15.5)	16.7 (16.4)	14.9 (14.9)	10.1 (10.1)	5.2 (5.2)	2.1 (2.1)	1.2 (1.2)
Welsh First Language	3,904 (3,809)	3.4 (2.0)	10.5 (11.1)	19.6 (20.1)	31.3 (28.5)	22.1 (24.7)	9.5 (10.7)	2.7 (3.9)	0.1 (0.1)	0.1 (0.1)
Welsh Second Language	8,128 (7,480)	11.6 (10.8)	18.2 (16.2)	13.3 (13.1)	21.3 (19.1)	16.0 (16.0)	10.0 (10.0)	5.1 (5.1)	2.6 (2.6)	1.9 (1.9)
Welsh Literature	3,031 (2,931)	5.8 (3.1)	18.6 (13.1)	19.6 (17.8)	39.2 (28.6)	15.5 (17.9)	9.9 (10.1)	12.0 (12.0)	1.0 (1.0)	1.1 (1.1)
Combined Subjects	14,480 (14,480)	0.9 (1.1)	6.8 (6.9)	13.4 (18.0)	21.0 (23.5)	23.8 (23.5)	16.5 (15.5)	10.4 (10.4)	4.4 (4.4)	2.7 (2.7)
Other Modern Languages	27,035 (28,234)	20.0 (20.0)	26.0 (26.0)	17.6 (17.6)	12.9 (12.9)	7.1 (7.1)	4.0 (4.0)	1.0 (1.0)	0.1 (0.1)	0.1 (0.1)
Other Sciences	20,003 (22,484)	3.5 (2.9)	7.6 (7.8)	13.1 (15.4)	24.5 (23.5)	20.6 (20.9)	12.0 (14.3)	5.7 (5.8)	3.0 (3.0)	1.0 (1.0)
Other Social Sciences	34,407 (36,769)	2.5 (2.2)	9.9 (9.4)	18.0 (19.6)	28.5 (29.1)	19.0 (19.1)	10.0 (9.7)	4.3 (4.2)	2.0 (2.0)	0.8 (0.8)
Other Technology	7,125 (7,125)	2.8 (2.4)	8.1 (9.2)	17.9 (13.6)	24.0 (18.8)	14.6 (18.0)	11.5 (17.0)	5.4 (12.2)	2.5 (6.3)	0.5 (2.5)
All Other Subjects	95,071 (109,748)	2.5 (2.2)	11.0 (10.4)	19.6 (19.1)	24.6 (25.0)	18.4 (18.4)	11.7 (12.1)	6.8 (7.3)	3.3 (3.3)	2.2 (1.5)
All Subjects	5,353,095 (5,415,176)	4.1 (3.6)	10.6 (10.5)	16.5 (18.1)	23.6 (22.3)	18.6 (18.7)	13.2 (13.3)	7.6 (8.5)	3.5 (3.5)	2.3 (1.5)

(1) Previously listed as 'Art and Design'
(2) Previously listed as 'Technology'
(3) Previously listed as 'Information Systems Computing'

Source: Joint Council for the GCSE

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Pretty boys outscore men with a strong jaw

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

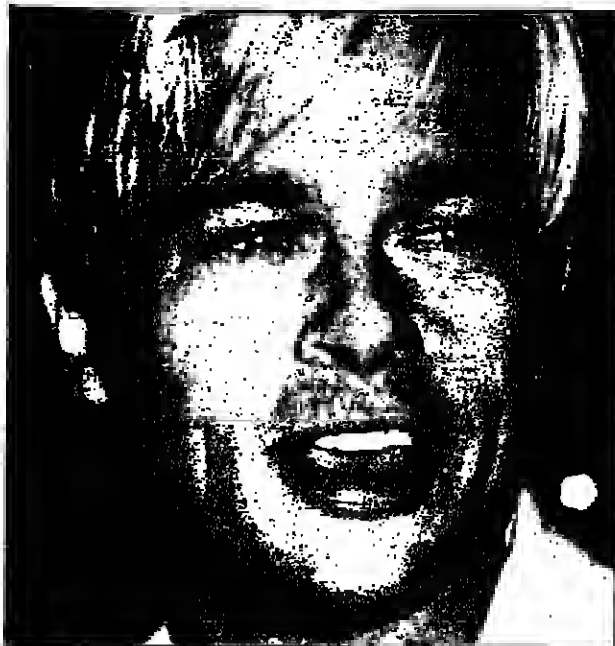
WOMEN FIND men with feminine faces more attractive than the ruggedly handsome stereotype with a strong jaw and prominent brows.

A Scottish university study of male and female preferences for facial characteristics of the opposite sex has found that although men are attracted to women with the most feminine features, women also find femininity in men appealing.

The research could explain the female fascination for Hollywood actors such as Leonardo DiCaprio, Johnny Depp and Brad Pitt, whose looks are more cute than brute.

Scientists from the University of St Andrews believe the results reveal a deep-rooted biological mechanism for choosing the best mate, with men preferring women who are most capable of bearing children and women choosing men who would make good fathers.

The scientists used computers to enhance the effects that female and male hormones produce on a face. Oestrogen, the female hor-



The faces of (from left to right) Brad Pitt, Johnny Depp and Leonardo DiCaprio, whose looks are more cute than brute, appeal to women for what they signal about a mate

mone, enhances a face's feminine shape whereas testosterone, the male hormone, causes masculinised features, notably a prominent jaw and heavy brows.

Men and women in Scotland, South Africa and Japan were

asked to judge the attractiveness of a panel of male and female faces. Dr David Perrett, the leader of the research team, expected to find that men would prefer the most feminised female face and women would like the most masculinised male

face as this would suggest the highest levels of sex hormones in either sex.

"From a biological perspective, high levels of sex hormones should make faces more attractive. This is because testosterone in men is related

to strength and resistance to disease, and oestrogen in women is related to health and fertility," Dr Perrett said.

Although this was true for female faces, the scientists found that the most attractive male face was one that had retained some

feminine features. "Making faces more masculinised in shape made the owners look more dominant, but it also made them look colder and more dishonest," he said.

"By contrast, giving faces a more feminine shape made

both males and females look kinder, more trustworthy, and even better parents."

The findings, published in *Nature*, support the view that human facial characteristics have evolved to provide important cues about a person's

reproductive potential. Women who apply cosmetics to make their eyebrows thinner and more arched, or make their lips fuller are increasing their attractiveness by making these features less masculine.

"Our finding of a preference for a feminised face shape in females fits predictions from evolutionary theory. The preference may have evolved because it offers an advantage in terms of reproductive success," the scientists said.

In men, however, a highly masculinised face was considered less attractive by women because it appeared less emotional, colder and less honest and co-operative.

Although high levels of testosterone in men are linked with a good immune system and overall strength, they are also linked with "more troubled relationships, with increased rates of infidelity, violence and divorce," said the researchers.

As the female preferences for feminised men were the same for all countries, the researchers believe the results indicate a universal female preference for men with feminine features.

Women miss out on heart therapy

NHS HOSPITALS are discriminating against women, the elderly and people from ethnic minorities who have had heart attacks, and concentrating their efforts on helping low-risk white men, a study says.

About 300 programmes are provided for heart-attack survivors, at a cost of £34m a year, but many who could benefit are not getting help. Two million people are treated for heart disease a year, a third of them women, but one survey showed they accounted for only 15 per cent of those enrolled in the programmes.

The study of research on cardiac rehabilitation carried out by the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination says discrimination in favour of men cannot be justified on clinical grounds. "There is no reason to believe that women, the elderly, ethnic minorities and patients with other types of heart disease would not also benefit."

The government-funded centre, based at the University of York, provides Which? style advice to doctors and managers on what works and what does not in medical care.

Recovery programmes provide exercise classes, counselling and information to patients, many of whom suffer anxiety and misconceptions about how far they should limit activities to prevent a recurrence. Patients say their main need is practical, honest advice about their condition and how to modify their life to avert more problems.

One question many patients have but are too embarrassed to ask is when it is safe to resume sex. Advice on sex is frequently overlooked and, when provided, is often inaccurate.

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

Fear about another attack is the most debilitating factor for most patients. Up to half say they are still avoiding physical activity and going out less four years after the event. The review says women who enter recovery programmes do as well as or better than men. Their need appears to be greater, since they are less likely to return to work after a heart attack, are more likely to give up sex and other activities and suffer more from depression.

Patients over 60 have to be cautious about doing too much exercise but research shows they respond as well to it as younger patients. The elderly who join rehabilitation programmes are less likely to be readmitted to hospital.

Among ethnic minorities, heart attacks exact a greater burden, since they suffer more illness and more restriction on their activities, yet they "appear to have been neglected" in research on rehabilitation.

The review says rehabilitation programmes are growing fast and work best when the exercise is combined with psychological and educational interventions. "Given the need to maintain lifestyle changes, the importance of long-term maintenance cannot be underestimated."

A recent study of heart-disease patients found most were not receiving appropriate drugs, were not taking regular exercise, were overweight and were not following an appropriate diet. Up to 90 per cent would have benefited from further changes in lifestyle and only 7 per cent were getting the best medical care.

Police confront home violence

MORE THAN 1,500 people have been charged with domestic violence in a crackdown on assaults in homes in Scotland.

For the past six months Strathclyde police, whose area includes Glasgow, have taken a more active approach to reports of domestic assaults. They have collected extra forensic evidence and witness statements from neighbours in an effort to bring charges and arrests whenever possible.

In the first six months 1,446 men and 65 women were charged with assaulting or threatening their partners or former partners. Out of nearly 5,000 reported domestic disputes since February, a total of 1,735 violent incidents involving partners or ex-partners were

BY JASON BENNETT
Crime Correspondent

recorded. The more serious cases included:

■ A woman dying from a health condition who was punched and slapped by her husband in their home;

■ A pregnant woman who was forced to seek medical advice about her unborn baby after her husband punched her in the stomach;

■ A woman whose husband poured hot water over her face and chest after he had already thrown hot coffee at her and punched her;

■ A young wheelchair-bound woman who was lifted out of her chair and thrown back into it during a row with her partner.

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Action to cut child abuse 'ineffective'

HALF OF all social workers think paedophiles should be held in prison indefinitely until they are judged no longer a risk to children, according to new research.

Nearly four out of five also believe that government policies are failing to tackle the problems of sex offenders, according to a survey for *Community Care* magazine. They are even more critical of the Government than is the general public, of which two-thirds think current policies are not effective.

The survey of 300 social workers and senior social workers coincides with the first anniversary of the Sex Offenders Register. Since it was implemented in September 1997, the register requires sex offenders to notify the police of their address as well as any change of name and address.

The penalty for not doing so is six months' imprisonment.

Over the past year there has been increasing vigilance as paedophiles - such as Robert Oliver, jailed for the killing of teenager Jason Swift - have been released into the community after serving their sentences.

By GLENDA COOPER
Social Affairs Correspondent

Most social workers believe that the Government has diverted public attention to the "stranger danger" when there is a much greater threat to children from their own families.

"Child abuse within the family is the largest area currently being neglected in government policy," said Ray Wye, a sexual crime consultant. "Although the Sex Offenders Register is a step in the right direction, there are serious shortcomings."

However, when a convicted paedophile moves into the area, half of the social workers questioned said that they would like to see the general public informed even though this has often led to mob violence in the past. More than half the public agrees with this.

Only one in seven social workers thinks the public should be told if a suspected paedophile without a conviction moves to the neighbourhood. Nearly three quarters thought the press do more harm than good by "outing" paedophiles. There is a lack of support for

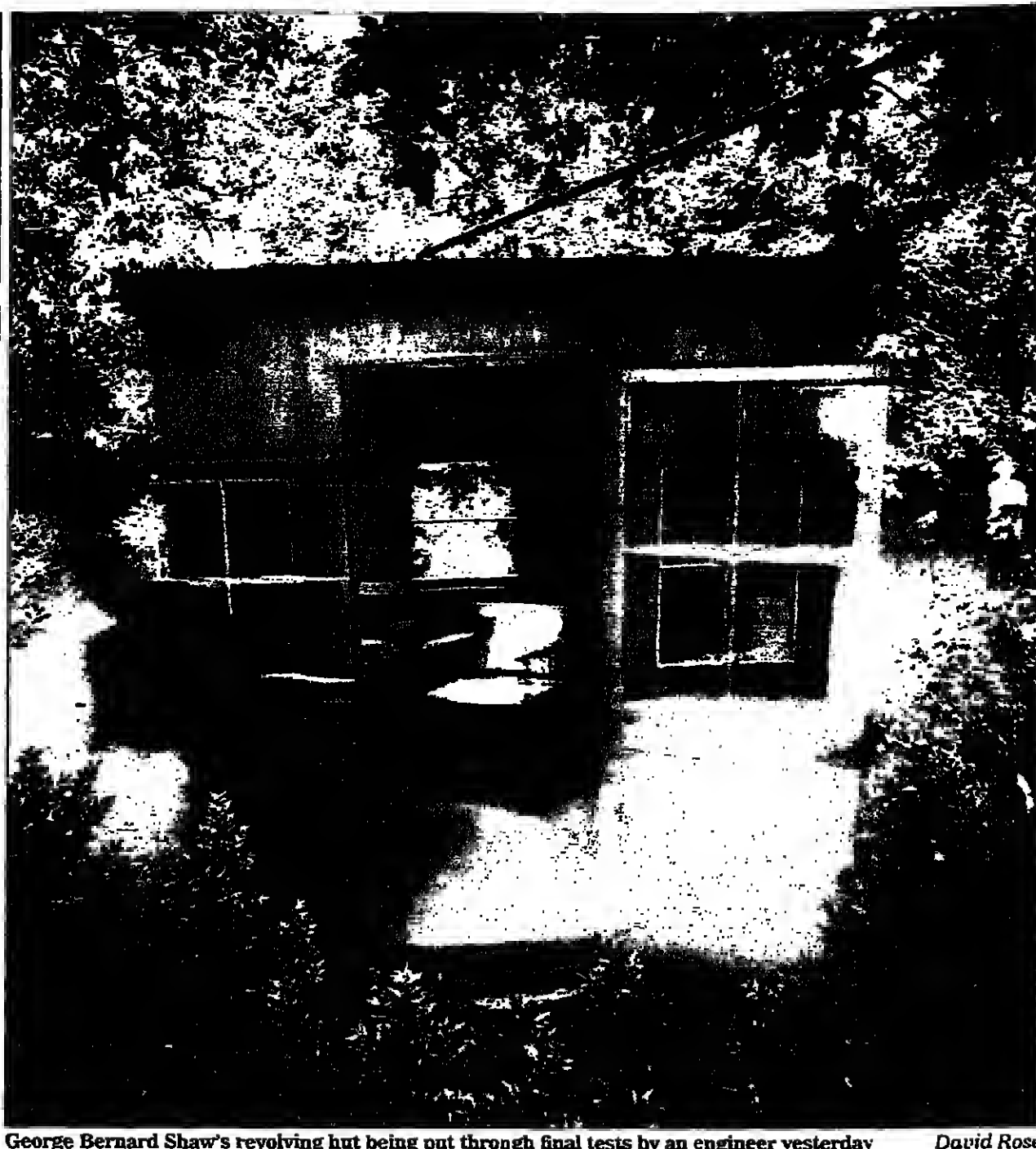
the Sex Offenders Register with less than a quarter thinking that its objectives have made it easier to work with paedophiles. But on average they believe that offenders as young as 15 should be included.

A majority think a register should also be kept of those suspected of abuse, or those found guilty in civil actions.

"Whilst in principle the setting up of a register marks a positive step to deal with the issue of sex offenders, our research highlights the shortfalls of government policy," said Terry Philpot, editor of *Community Care*. "The Sex Offenders Register will only work if it is maintained and monitored efficiently, and is part of a larger resource made available to tackle the threat of sex offenders."

A second survey of 500 members of the public found that family members were most likely to be a threat to children, but a third still thought a stranger was the most dangerous person.

Most of the public thought that paedophiles should be punished for their crimes, but should also receive treatment.



George Bernard Shaw's revolving hut being put through final tests by an engineer yesterday David Rose

WINDOWS ON THE WORLD

William Cowper wrote in his greenhouse in Olney, Buckinghamshire before building a tiny summerhouse in which he wrote *The Task*. It was so small that he compared it to a sedan chair.



Dylan Thomas, author of *Under Milk Wood*, wrote in his blue bicycle shed on the cliff above his cottage at Laugharne, Dyfed. On the walls were pictures of Auden, Lawrence and Hardy and the floor was covered in manuscripts.



Vera Brittain wrote *Letters from a Daughter* in a hut in the garden of her gamekeeper's cottage in the New Forest. Her daughter, Shirley Williams, is building a study, designed to revolve with the sun.



Virginia Woolf, author of *To the Lighthouse*, used a small converted tool-shed at Monk's Road, East Sussex. Later, a larger study was built at the far end of the garden under trees.

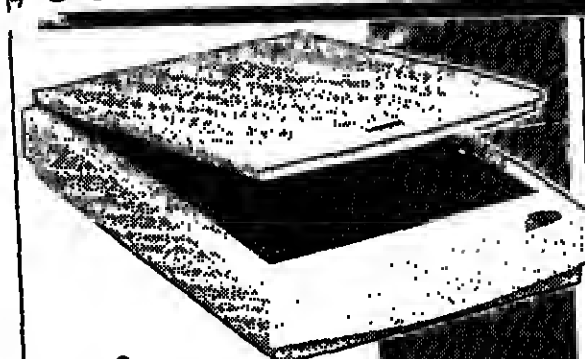


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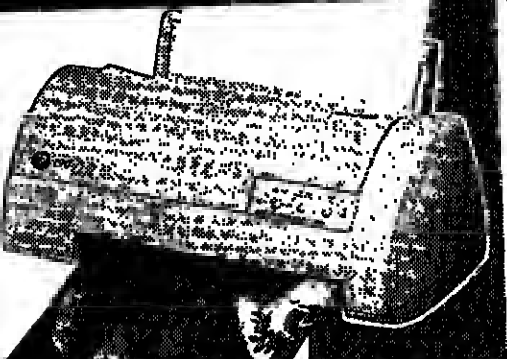
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Shaw's revolving den fixed by spin doctors

MANY WRITERS have hidden from the distractions of everyday life by retreating to the garden shed. For most it was a somewhat austere place but George Bernard Shaw was not prepared to give up his creature comforts for the sake of his art. He bought a shed and mounted it on a mechanism that could move it round in pursuit of the sun.

Shaw bequeathed his house and the hut to the National Trust when he died in 1950. Yesterday the Trust revealed its efforts to restore the shed. The mechanism seized up 20 years ago but University of Hertfordshire engineers have repaired it. In the next few months the woodwork will be renovated and the interior painted.

The playwright lived at Shaw's Corner in Ayot St Lawrence, Hertfordshire and even during his lifetime his home and the hut, which he

called his "retreat", was a tourist attraction.

The exterior of the hut, at the bottom of the garden behind trees, was plain, but it was well-appointed and had electricity.

Shaw would sit in a cane chair typing, within reach of a wall-mounted telephone. There was also a rudimentary bed where he could stretch out for thought or sleep. In winter he installed an electric fire.

Lisa Ramshaw, of the Trust, said Shaw wrote most of his plays there "because then his wife and housekeeper could tell callers he was out and he wouldn't have to speak to anyone."

In his diary for 1944, James Lees-Milne recalled visiting Shaw. "We came to a little asbestos-roofed summer house that revolves on its own axis ... I said, 'Do you sit out here in the

winter then?' 'I have an electric stove' and he pointed to a thick cable attached to the summer house from an iron pylon behind it."

Nothing in Shaw's papers suggests when he bought the hut but Peter Lines, of the University of Hertfordshire, said it probably dated from the 1920s.

Mr Lines, Dean of Engineering and Information Sciences, said he had never seen a mechanism like it. "It is very simple and we think he would have just bought it off the shelf in kit form. It must have been one of the first revolving summer houses and it has lasted very well ... All we needed to do was replace the metal bearing and it started to work again. It doesn't move all the time - Shaw would have had to come outside when he was in the shade and just push it round until it was in the sun again."

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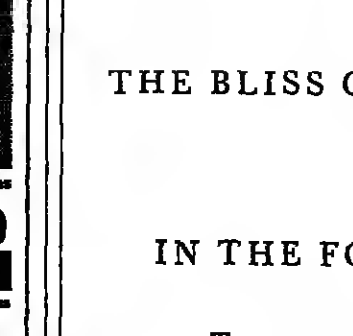
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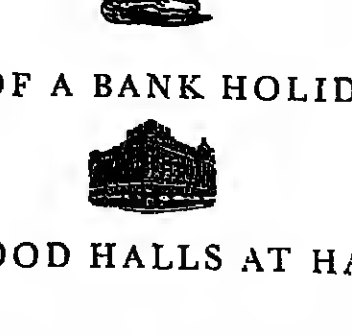
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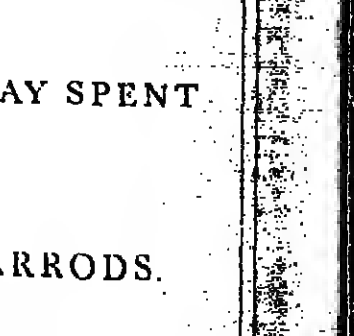
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JP 11/15/98



Yardley's adverts in the 1950s (left) contrast with its attempt to attract a younger market by using Linda Evangelista (right) last year. Richard Heathcote/Star Images

Huge rise in trains cancelled and late

By RANDEEP RAMESH
Transport Correspondent

Passenger watchdogs received a record number of complaints in the first full year of rail privatisation because of an "appalling" service, which on some lines was as "bad as British Rail".

A report by the Central Rail Users' Consultative Committee blamed the rise in complaints on "a truly dreadful performance" by some operators and a huge increase in cancellations, delays and overcrowding. Complaints soared to 19,792 - a record increase of 103 per cent in the past year - which saw the last of the remaining lines privatised. Passengers' anger has been fuelled by the rising tide of late trains. Latest statistics show more than 257,000 trains were delayed and a further 47,000 cancelled in 1997-98.

"It is extremely disconcerting that performance has plummeted in the first full year that trains have operated in the private sector," the report disclosed. The National Rail Enquiry Service, the telephone train information service, also came under attack. Last year train companies were fined hundreds of thousands of pounds after operators left the phones ringing.

The watchdog said the telephone service has improved but the quality of information had not. The committee pointed out that there had been a rise of 246 per cent in complaints concerned with "the accuracy of information". Poor performance has also proved a problem. The report noted that of the 53 routes specified for the rail network, "in terms of punctuality two out of three service routes provided a worse service".

London commuter services were singled out for poor performance. Connex South East, which serves hundreds of big towns in Britain, was criticised not only for running 30.5 per cent of its trains late on one route but also for its fare policy, which has seen some cheap day returns rise by as much as 15 per cent in 12 months. "Virgin has significantly increased the price of many Super Savers on cross-country routes... we are concerned of the possible loss of walk-up fares."

David Bertram, chairman of the committee, challenged train companies to halve the amount of time trains had to run late before passengers received compensation - and to double the compensation paid. He said: "If operators say that passengers are their primary concern, they should alter the regulations."

The industry hit back. Christopher Garnett, a member of the board of the Association of Train Operating Companies, said there had also been a number of successes, including millions invested in new trains and stations.

"The railway industry agrees that there is still much to do to redress decades of under-investment and to match rising customer expectations following privatisation."

Yardley, no longer smelling of roses, goes into receivership

ONE OF the biggest names in British perfumes, Yardley, stood on the brink of collapse yesterday as it was placed in receivership.

The company, which has Royal Warrants to its name, is to be run by receivers from accountant KPMG while they seek a buyer. It employs 300 staff and operates from a head office in central London and a manufacturing base in Basildon, Essex.

Its fall comes after a year of trying to shake off its old-fashioned image and trying to reinvent itself. The group was desperately trying to remove itself from the old lace and lavender image promoted for more than two centuries.

Founded in 1770, the com-

By PETER VICTOR

pany - which supplies cosmetics and perfumes to the Royal Family - last year swapped its model from English rose actress Helena Bonham Carter to supermodel Linda Evangelista.

As the legions of elderly women who were the traditional mainstay of the business started to die off, it was forced to go head to head with the highly competitive designer cosmetics companies for the younger market.

A racy new advertising campaign swapped the Old English image of the company for that of Ms Evangelista, shackled in chains and handcuffs.

At the time, chief executive Richard Finn said: "The Eng-

lish Rose image was a digression. In the Sixties, Yardley was associated with Twiggy, Carnaby Street and mini skirts, not stuck in a cottage garden with green wellies."

The company tried to meet head-on the cosmetics produced by new, younger labels such as Tommy Hilfinger, Calvin Klein and Donna Karan.

Its range of traditional perfumes, talcum powders and body lotions, using lavender, English rose and spring flower, which have been favourites for generations, was expanded to encompass more funky cosmetics with brightly coloured lipsticks and nail varnishes.

But the revamp attempts were not without pitfalls: images of a semi-naked super-

model chained in a cell were feared to have affected sales among customers in the Middle East. Clientele in those countries were enthusiastic purchasers of Yardley's decorous Old English look.

But yesterday's decision by the banks who back the company shows that the move either came too late or was simply misconceived.

Administrator Tony Thompson said the group has debts of £120 million and had considered closing the Basildon factory to

buy products elsewhere. "Our first priority as receivers is to quickly take control of Yardley's businesses and its assets," he said.

A spokesman for the Royal Warrant Holders' Association said: "If a company goes into receivership it must inform the Lord Chamberlain's office and its Royal Warrants may be reviewed."

"Royal Warrants cannot be bought or sold, they are appointed to a company and are reviewed every 10 years."

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Console-games giants locked in price war

IT HAS been dubbed the "console war", a bitter campaign of hype and marketing waged by arch-rivals Sony and Nintendo.

Sony has mounted its latest offensive by slashing the price of its popular PlayStation games console by £30 from this Friday.

In a move that will please parents - last year an estimated 600,000 PlayStations found their way under the Christmas tree - Sony has outflanked its rival's N64 by offering its console for the same price of £99.99.

The price cut is the latest in a long line of discount deals, cuts and counter-cuts. The two rivals are slogging it out to dominate a computer-games software market expected to reach £980m in sales this year.

Fierce price-cutting has been a feature of the market since the PlayStation went on sale in the UK three years ago. It took on the Sega Saturn as manufacturers unveiled the new generation of 32-bit games systems.

Price-discounting not only shifts old PlayStation stock but could once again dent market share for Nintendo and Sega, said one industry source. Sony

By GARY FINN

Sony has systematically cut its launch price from £299.99 to £129.99, the last cut in March last year as Nintendo prepared to unveil its 64-bit Nintendo 64. Nintendo hit back with a £50 cut last autumn, taking it to its current price of £99.99. Nintendo said it would monitor the effects of the latest Sony price-cut on sales before responding.

Games industry analysts say the Sony tactic is a shrewd ploy to prop up an increasingly outmoded console.

While Sony has enjoyed unrivalled market dominance - it claims to have already sold 2.5 million consoles in the UK - thanks mainly to having a software library of more than 400 popular titles, the future is said to belong to a host of 128-bit games consoles that could hit Europe by next autumn.

Price-discounting not only shifts old PlayStation stock but could once again dent market share for Nintendo and Sega, said one industry source. Sony

is matching its discounting with a £10m UK PlayStation promotion effort expected in the run-up to Christmas.

However, the gaming magazine, Edge, predicts 1999 as the last year of PlayStation dominance. "The system isn't going anywhere astonishing technologically," it said, "and it is hard to envision software continuing to improve much past this Christmas... 1999 will witness PlayStation fever finally beginning to fade."

Gamers are said to be eagerly awaiting the Sega Dreamcast, which could be in Japanese stores this Christmas.

The new game has more processing power, with 128-bit technology, which should outclass in both realism and visual effects the gaming experience offered by 32-bit and 64-bit formats.

Dreamcast is being seen as Sega's last chance to recapture the gaming crown it last held with the popular Megadrive, home to Sonic the Hedgehog.

VIAGRA CORNER

DESPATCHES FROM THE FRONTIERS OF MEDICINE

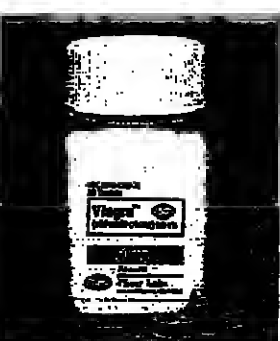
IN A coincidence that will not be lost on readers of the *Kama Sutra*, deaths linked with Viagra in the first four months after it was licensed in the United States reached 69.

The figures from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) show that 46 of the patients had heart attacks and two had strokes. In the rest, the cause of death was unknown.

The FDA said it had not changed its view of the drug's safety but would continue to evaluate the need for regula-

tory action. More than 3.6 million prescriptions for Viagra were dispensed between late March and July. The average age of those who died was 64.

FDA-required labels warn that Viagra should not be used by heart patients who are taking nitroglycerine or other nitrate drugs. The combination can cause a sudden drop in blood pressure. Of the 69 deaths, 12 patients were taking nitroglycerine or a nitrate medication, the FDA reported. Twenty-five of the patients



died or had the onset of symptoms leading to death four to five hours after using the drug, 18 of them immediately following sexual intercourse. Pfizer, the maker of Viagra, has said it "is safe and effective" when used properly.

JEREMY LAURANCE

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WWF

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Sierra Leone condemns 16 to death

TONY BLAIR'S African ally faces an embarrassing confrontation with his British patron following death sentences handed down this week to 16 supporters of Sierra Leone's ousted military junta, including five journalists.

The Foreign Office minister, Anthony Lloyd, said yesterday he was "very concerned" and would be "urgently contacting our [European Union] partners" to co-ordinate a response.

At the height of the row over shipments of arms to Sierra Leone earlier this year, the Prime Minister dismissed the

BY MARCUS TANNER

apparent breach of United Nations and EU sanctions as a "hoax". "Let's not forget that both the UN and the UK were trying to help a democratically elected regime," Mr Blair said. Those sentenced to hang by the government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah include Hilton Fyfe, a well-known former BBC World Service presenter for the African service, Felix George, the former head of the West African country's Broadcasting Corporation, a newspaper editor Ibrahim Ben Kargbo

and a radio journalist, Olivia Mensah, who has given birth to a son in prison since her arrest.

Friends and family members of the convicts wept as they were led from the court in the capital, Freetown. Mr Kargbo said: "We know we are going to die. But this is a pointer to all decent citizens that they too could be here [sentenced to death] one day."

Mr Lloyd said he intended to speak to President Kabbah "as soon as possible". He said Britain would "make clear to the government of Sierra Leone the need for them to pay heed to

human rights, due process and international norms".

The condemned have 21 days to appeal.

The verdicts have drawn sharp protests from the Paris-based Reporters sans Frontières and the human rights body Amnesty International. The 16 are seen as apologists for the brutal military regime of Major Johnny Koroma which seized power in May 1997, but hanging is seen as an absurdly disproportionate response.

The army coup in the former British colony became politically controversial in Britain this

year because of the role of Sandline International, a British company, which supplied the Nigerian-led West African force that ousted Major Koroma. Sandline said the Foreign Office gave it permission to intervene, despite a UN embargo on supplying arms to either side.

"The constant refrain from government ministers was, 'OK, things may not have been well handled here, but in essence, the good guys won'," Menzies Campbell, foreign affairs spokesman for the Liberal Democrats, told BBC Radio 4 yesterday. "It will take something

of the shine off the proposition that the 'good guys' won if one of the actions of the good guys is to execute journalists."

Anthony Goldman, of the Economist Intelligence Unit, said the sentences showed that the "ethical" foreign policy of the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, was coming unstuck. "An ill-advised policy has now come home to roost. Since [the military] were ousted, there's simply been an escalation of fighting and terrible atrocities," he said.

Critics also complain that President Kabbah's restoration has turned Sierra Leone

into a department of Nigeria. Some 10,000 Nigerian troops patrol the capital as part of the West African peace-keeping force. Key ministries, including defence, are also in the hands of Nigerians. "We have replaced an unpleasant military government with Nigerian occupation," Mr Goldman added. "That is the mess British policy has created."

Having publicly committed itself to President Kabbah's government, Mr Blair's influence now faces a very public test as Britain tries to get the death sentences commuted.

The International Bar Association, meanwhile, said the Freetown authorities had done their best in appalling circumstances to provide fair trials. "The whole infrastructure of the country has been destroyed, there are very few lawyers and they are working from ancient law books," said Paul Hoddinott, the IBA executive director. "We have been active in raising objections [during the trials] and they have been acknowledged."

More than 60 civilians are standing trial, and 38 junta soldiers are facing a court martial.

Storm as big as Texas moves in

A HURRICANE the size of Texas, fickle in force and direction, edged towards North Carolina yesterday, threatening the east coast of the United States with one of the biggest emergencies of the decade - or a mere tropical storm, depending on its mood.

But as winds up to 100mph began to lambast the coast of the Carolinas, the state and federal authorities were preparing for the worst. More than half a million people were evacuated from the resorts of North and South Carolina on Tuesday.

Chastened by the experience of Hurricane Fran, which killed 24 people in the same area two years ago, residents and holidaymakers were said to have needed little prompting to leave this time for Hurricane Bonnie.

While a few hardened year-round residents remained behind, determined to tough out the storm, thousands of others boarded up their houses, packed belongings, fuelled their cars and joined the slow procession of cars marshalled by police along main roads, now designated hurricane routes.

With hurricane warnings, signalled by red and black flags, in force along a 500-mile stretch of coast, some tourists were resentful about their interrupted holiday. Many, without insur-

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

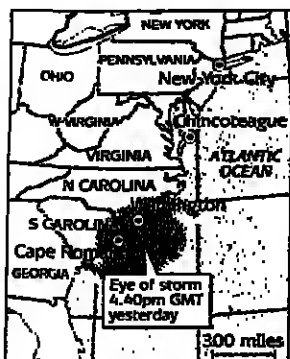
ance for hurricane losses, stood to lose money.

They were directed at least 50 miles inland, where it was hoped they would escape the brunt of the storm. The state authorities in North Carolina had organised emergency shelters and had already accommodated more than 16,000 people by yesterday afternoon. Such was the uncertainty about where the hurricane might land that shelters were also on standby as far south as Georgia and as far north as the Virginia coast.

It was the Carolinas, though, that were braced for the full force of the winds and water. In North Carolina the normally bustling resort of Outer Banks was eerily empty, and the authorities were cutting off water and electricity supplies as a precaution against damage and pollution.

Those choosing to remain were warned they needed to be self-sufficient, as no help could be guaranteed until the storm was past. As well as stocking up on perishable food, candles and batteries, many had bought small generators and were prepared to retreat to cellars and bathrooms for the duration.

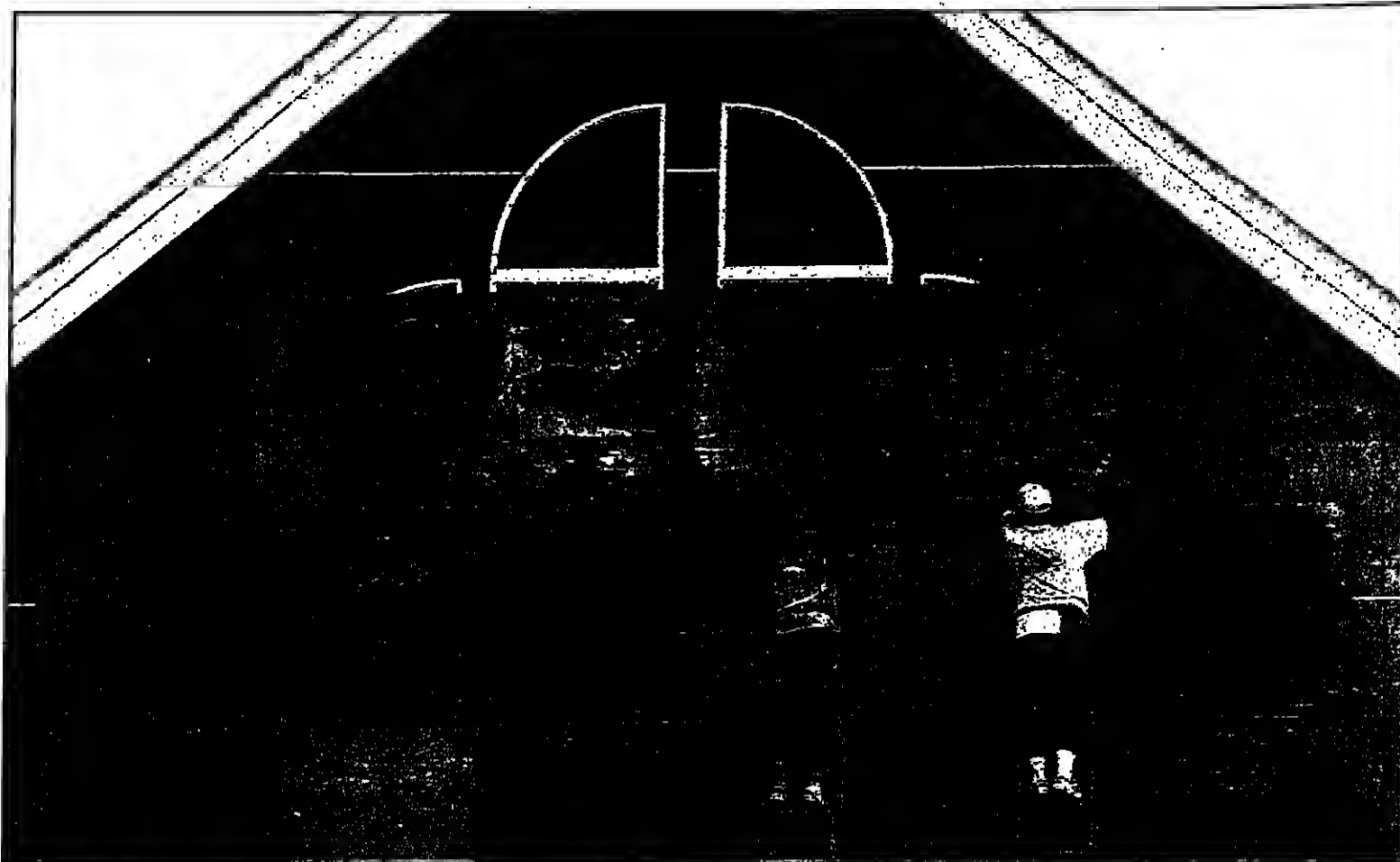
At midday, a last call went out



from the National Guard to anyone having second thoughts to leave, while the causeways were still open and the roads clear.

The military was also taking precautions. More than 60 of the larger ships, at the Norfolk naval base in Virginia and at smaller ports in the Carolinas, were moved 300 miles out to sea to ride out the storm. They included the aircraft carriers USS Enterprise and the USS Roosevelt. At Pope Air Force base in North Carolina, every plane that was "flyable" was flown to bases further inland.

The emergency effort was being co-ordinated by the federal and state authorities, who had been on emergency alert since Sunday. The headquarters of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in Washington



Workers finish boarding up at a holiday resort in Sandbridge, Virginia, as Hurricane Bonnie heads closer

Reuters

(Fema) was abuzz with preparations; hotlines for charitable contributions were in place. Equipment and survival supplies were placed on standby as were search and rescue teams. Agency departments received regular briefings through the day from monitoring stations along the coast, and

from military bases coordinating relief preparations.

The whole exercise is designed to render the unpredictable - a hurricane whose progress seemed to slow to a meander while its force continued to grow - as predictable as possible. Leaflets instruct people how to prepare, "even at

this eleventh hour to reduce your vulnerability". The advice includes tips on how to assemble a "disaster-supplies kit, including emergency food and water, a torch, batteries, a first-aid kit, a tin-opener and essential medicines", and the need to have sufficient cash, as bank dispensers could be knocked out.

Brochures instructed on how to board up your house, secure the roof and how to tape the windows in star patterns to reduce the risk of flying glass.

The slowness of Hurricane Bonnie's progress, and uncertainty about where it would land, was complicating preparations yesterday as the time of

the hurricane arrival on land was continuously put back.

Even the most militarily efficient of the Fema staff, though, appreciated the human aspect: "Think of the worry; these poor guys could be in their shelters for 18 hours, not knowing whether they have a house to go back to."

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Fighting on the streets of Kinshasa as rebels attack

PANIC RIPPLED through Kinshasa yesterday as the sound of heavy artillery rumbled through the air as government and rebel forces fought in the outskirts of the city.

One day after President Laurent Kabila returned to Kinshasa predicting imminent victory over rebel forces, government and rebels fought an extended battle in a forest area near the Kinshasa airport.

Streets were deserted as nervous soldiers threw up hundreds of road blocks across the city. State radio urged citizens to stay in doors and Zimbabwean helicopter gunships buzzed the city, flying low along the river shore. Fighting erupted late Tuesday night and continued through Wednesday morning with the sound of explosions and small arms fire heard across the city.

The sound of artillery fire subsided after noon but the thunderous sound of distant explosions could be heard intermittently in the late afternoon.

In the morning, hundreds of citizens fled from suburbs near Ntali airport, about 20 kilometres east of this sprawling city of some 4 million people. Tanks, troop trucks and South African-made armoured cars raced through the city around Bam towards Kabila's residence.

In recent days, rebel forces suffered a series of military setbacks as Angola and Zimbabwe sent troops, tanks and aircraft to back Kabila's faltering army.

With Angolan forces moving northeast toward Kinshasa and Zimbabwean troops pushing south, rebels were squeezed between two advancing armies.

But rebel leader Bizima Karaba on Tuesday threatened that rebels would react to the squeeze by attacking Kinshasa.

The extent of the fighting remains unclear, but Mwenezi Kongoh, the Congolese justice minister, said about 300 rebel troops were discovered in a forest area known as Milonga. The fight did not appear to be a full-scale rebel assault, but indicates that rebel troops are

BY ROSS HERBERT
in Kinshasa

closer to Kinshasa than previously believed and potentially preparing for an attack on the airport, that was used to ferry in Zimbabwe troops and arms.

Information minister Didier Muvengi tried to calm the city on state radio, describing the fight as a "mopping up operation" as government troops searched for rebels in civilian clothes who tried to disappear into the local population.

No explanation was offered for the use of heavy artillery

against such a small force.

Doctors predicted heavy casualties if fighting hits Kinshasa, because of the dense housing that covers some 30 kilometres east to west and 25 kilometres north to south.

The fighting leaves South African diplomacy in tatters and appears to kill any chance of peaceful settlement. President Nelson Mandela tried to negotiate a cease-fire and pull out of foreign forces.

However, Mr Kongoh and Mawana Nanga Mawampanga, the Congo Agriculture minister and a member of Kabila's inner

circle, bitterly slammed South Africa's initiative and criticised Mandela's motives.

Mr Mawampanga said: "If Mandela wants to mediate he has to condemn this as an invasion. If he has one ounce of moral fibre left he will condemn it. I think Mandela is just a puppet of the United States. He sold arms to Rwanda and he doesn't want to lose his customers (by siding with rebels, Rwanda and Uganda)."

The bitterness of the rhetoric against South Africa means the peace process is dead in all but name.

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مكتبة القرآن

The many deaths of public enemy Nidal

OUTSIDE ABU NIDAL'S fly-blown office in the Mar Elias Palestinian refugee camp in Beirut, two middle-aged men shrugged their shoulders. Same old story, they said. No, Abu Nidal is not dead and not in an Egyptian hospital bed. But they did not say it with quite the usual certainty. It is the fifth time we have been told of the ruthless Palestinian killer's imminent demise. So how many lives does a gunman have?

By ROBERT FISK
in Beirut

bin Laden in Afghanistan. But at least in Abu Nidal's case it had the merit of evidence to back up the claim. His real name is Sabri el-Banna, and he leads - or led - an execution squad that attacked Israeli airline ticket counters at Rome and Vienna airports in 1985, bombed a PanAm jet on the ground at Rome in 1973 and, possibly, was responsible for bombing a TWA airliner over the Aegean in 1986, killing 88 people.

His men murdered Jewish worshippers in synagogues and, by trying to assassinate the

Israeli ambassador to London, touched off the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, in which more than 17,000 civilians died in air raids and bombardments by Israel. The latter claimed that the would-be killers were from the Palestine Liberation Organisation. The PLO said it was Abu Nidal, then working for Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The Israelis were wrong and Mr Arafat was right, but the world forgot the fact.

So where is Abu Nidal? Rumoured until three years ago to be living in Libya, he is now said to be comatose in a Cairo hospital. Nonsense, say the Egyptian security police. "He is not

here," Egypt's Foreign Minister, Amr Mahmoud Moussa, said yesterday.

In Beirut and the Palestinian-controlled areas of Gaza and the West Bank, word has it that the Egyptians are preparing to let Abu Nidal die of cancer before announcing to the world that they can confirm the death of one of its most wanted killers.

Palestinian officials in Beirut suspect that there have indeed been security negotiations in the past few weeks between Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. The handover of Abu Nidal to Egypt by the Libyans - allegedly negotiated by President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia -

might help to end United Nations sanctions against Libya. In this context, the Anglo-American offer to let Libya's two Lockerbie bomb suspects stand trial in The Hague makes more sense. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, it seems, is being allowed, slowly, to come back in from the cold.

But conspiracy theories are part of life in the Middle East and there is so far not a shred of proof that Abu Nidal is alive, let alone dying. Three years ago, he was reported killed in a vicious battle within his Fatah Revolutionary Council, which has at various stages been given sanctuary in Iraq, Syria

and Libya. In Lebanon, some of his henchmen fell victim to counter-revolutionary purges and were buried alive with only a metal pipe giving them air. Fellow gunmen would pour water and juice down the pipe into the buried man's mouth until execution orders arrived from Libya. Then they would fire a single bullet down the pipe and fill it in with earth.

Sabri el-Banna was born in Jaffa in present-day Israel and would now be 61 - if he is alive. His *nom de guerre* means Father of Struggle, but PLO officials have long suspected that he has worked for anyone but the Palestinians. They believe that

Israel as well as Iraq and Libya have used his services, especially in attacks against Yasser Arafat's officials before the 1993 Oslo agreement. Abu Nidal's grand-nephews, Nassereddin and Omar el-Banna, fell victim to a roadside shooting in Beirut last year. They were killed by a gunman who caught them - unusually for anyone living in Lebanon - stopped at a traffic light.

Death is (or was) truly Abu Nidal's business. Even in Cold War Eastern Europe, he would be permitted to talk only to Polish or East German intelligence officials. Communist apparatchiks and fraternal delegations were kept well away.



Abu Nidal: Ruthless head of an execution squad

Hizbollah and Israel step up border conflict

IT STARTED with six Lebanese civilians wounded by shellfire in the small village of Mashgara. The Hizbollah warned that they would retaliate.

The Israelis claimed the shells came not from their guns but from the artillery of the so-called "South Lebanon Army" - an assertion that cut little ice with the Hizbollah, since it is armed, funded, uniformed and commanded by Israelis.

Then the Israelis attacked a leader of the Lebanese Amal militia as he drove down the coast road south of Tyre. The helicopter-fired missile killed him instantly.

Despite the death of Hosam al-Amin and the six wounded civilians - the latter a clear breach of the 1996 south Lebanon ceasefire - Israel warned the Hizbollah not to retaliate. "I would not advise anyone on the other side to take action in response," Yitzhak Mordechai, the Israeli Defence Minister, said. "We reserve the right... to act as long as we need to against leaders of terrorism and terrorism itself wherever it is found."

He sounded like President Bill Clinton - and paid no heed to the fact that the conflict in southern Lebanon is a classic guerrilla war against an occu-

By ROBERT FISK

pation army. In any event, the Hizbollah would have none of it.

Overnight, they fired up to 20 Katyusha rockets into Israel, their standard response when Lebanese civilians have been wounded. Nineteen Israelis were wounded or in a state of shock - all were treated on the spot - in the northern Galilee settlement of Kiryat Shmuna. At least one Israeli Labour party official immediately argued that Israel's killing of al-Amin was not worth the night that Kiryat Shmuna's inhabitants spent in the shelters.

In fact, it was the shelling of Mashgara that prompted the rockets - and thus, inevitably, further mutual retaliation yesterday. By midday, Hizbollah fire had killed a "South Lebanon Army" gunman and Israeli shells were falling along a line of hills north of Nabatea.

Full-scale war in Lebanon has been provoked by lesser events; and the Lebanese still suspect that Israel will fulfil a threat to bomb its electricity stations and infrastructure if more Israeli occupation soldiers are killed. President Clinton's post-bombardment rhetoric seems to be finding a dangerous echo in Lebanon.



Residents of the Israeli town of Kiryat Shmuna who were wounded in the rocket attack from Lebanon. The barrages on Kiryat Shmuna and other settlements in north Galilee came after the killing in an Israel helicopter raid in south Lebanon of a senior official of the Amal militia

Zhirinovsky, Lebed and communists join coalition talks

COCK-FIGHTING pit, hot-air factory, drinking den and knocking shop. The popular image of the Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, and the glossy-jawed men in grey suits who sit in it, could scarcely have been worse.

Until now. Now the tectonic plates beneath Russia's political system are shifting, weakening the ground beneath the broken figure of President Boris Yeltsin. And suddenly, the honorable gentlemen have caught the whiff of power.

Since his abrupt restoration to office on Sunday, Viktor Chernomyrdin, the acting prime minister, has been in intense talks with parliamentary leaders. He is wooing their support because he wants them to confirm him in his post.

But he may also feel that, if he is to rule for long in a crisis-hit country, he will have to share some of his power. Or, at least, pretend to. Thus, he has referred to creating a broad-based government of "accord". Thus, to the approval of the left, he has disparaged monetary economics as not the only answer to Russia's woes.

And thus, too, the wily premier-designate has shuffled from pillar to post, absorbing one demand after another.

The loudest of these have come from the Duma's generally cautious Communist speaker, Gennady Seleznyov, who wants Mr Yeltsin's resignation, a constitution that gives more power to parliament, and a coalition government.

Mr Chernomyrdin appears to be listening. Last night, before heading for Crimea, he was to meet Vladimir Zhirinovsky, mad-cap leader of the ultra-nationalist Liberal Democrats, the second largest party, and Gennady Zyuganov, head of the

By PHIL REEVES
in Moscow

dominant Communist faction. Intriguingly, he is also talking to Alexander Lebed, the popular ex-paratroop general. A commission, with representatives from both houses of parliament and the government, is drawing up proposals on policy. For now, consensus politics is all the rage. Tears and radical reformers are out.

"The Government used to treat the Duma as if it was only a mob of chatterboxes," said Yuri Krasnov, head of the Duma's scientific research department. "But now its role has drastically changed. The President and government knows there could be a social collapse here. That's forced them to turn their face to parliament."

This may be a fleeting taste for the legislature, but it is an important moment in its short history. The Duma was created after Mr Yeltsin's violent stand-off with parliament in 1993, using its pre-Revolutionary name. But it was restricted by the constitution which the President had secured by a rigged referendum in the same year, and which concentrated power on the Kremlin.



Vladimir Zhirinovsky: The Liberal Democrats' leader, in talks with Chernomyrdin

It can pressure the government by, for instance, holding up the annual budget or the land code, or by refusing to verify the Start-2 arms agreement or, most recently, by rejecting parts of a package of economic austerity measures introduced by government, under pressure from the International Monetary Fund.

But it is fundamentally weak, especially when compared with the United States Congress. Its overall lack of clout was compounded by a lack of re-

spect, born of lurid accounts of the wild behaviour of its some of its members and the staggeringly numerous - 10,000 by one estimate - aides and guards in their retinues.

There have been stories of wild parties behind its sombre stone walls in downtown Moscow. Violence has never been far away. One member blew up his own office when a bomb went off by mistake; four were killed on the 1996 campaign trail. A Communist aide was gunned down in Moscow this week. Worse, many Russians have no political faith in the Duma. The link between the voter and the elected is tenuous. The former regards the latter as no different from the Soviet party fat cats, who care more about access to the trough than ideology.

Once in office, they sweep off to Moscow to a faraway land of free apartments, \$60,000 relocation allowances, chauffeured cars, medical services in elite clinics, spa holidays and air tickets.

Its reputation reached its nadir in September 1996 when the newspaper, *Moskovski Komsomolets*, published an extraordinary memo written by cleaners, fed up with clearing up after nights of debauchery. They grumbled about cleaning up piles of excrement found on couches in an eight-floor hall. Chunks of leather had been cut out of the seats and backs of sofas, "as if someone was making a jacket".

The issue now is whether the Duma can seize the chance to bring about change, and become a national weighty institution, or whether it will once again collapse in a gust of acrimonious hot air.

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Leading article,
Review, page 3

Emergency talks on rouble

RUSSIA'S ACTING prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin flew out of Moscow last night for emergency talks with the International Monetary Fund at the height of an economic crisis which saw the rouble in free-fall.

Economic turmoil continued apace yesterday causing the Russian Central Bank to suspend trading on the rouble, and to declare the day's

results "null and void", after the currency shed 10 per cent in the first few hours of the morning's business.

The IMF said that the purpose of Mr Chernomyrdin's meeting with the IMF's managing director Michel Camdessus, due to be held in the Crimea, was "to discuss recent developments in Russia and their impact on the region, particularly Ukraine".

KENNETH BRANAGH MADELEINE STOWE WILLIAM HURT

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Germans invade Poland for food

ON THE bridge across the Oder, the human tide never ebbs. Commuters are swept in from the east by the morning rush, shoppers come and go during the day, and the workers return to their homes in the evening. Cars wait patiently with their engines turned off, as the guards and customs officers fuss over their contents.

This is the other Frankfurt, not the rich metropolis in the west that is about to become Europe's financial capital, but the frontier town where the Wild East begins. This Frankfurt is poor and seething with resentment, blaming the money-men in its namesake and the politicians in Bonn for eight years of misery. In short, it is the kind of place where Gerhard Schröder's Socialist Democrats are set to scoop the overwhelming majority of votes in the forthcoming elections.

For pedestrians crossing the bridge from "Fortress Europe" to Poland there are few formalities. They flash their identity papers by a small booth, and off they go into the land of the miracle economy. They file back at dusk like an army of ants, laden with carrier bags.

Trade flows freely across the frontier. Frankfurt's inhabitants pack up with food and cheap clothing at the market on the other side, where the stallholders do not turn up their noses at Deutschmarks. The

By IMRE KARACS
in Frankfurt an der Oder

Poles can use their zlotys in Frankfurt, too, but they are not exactly queuing up for the privilege.

By all accounts, capitalism has been kinder to the residents of Shubice, Frankfurt's Polish sister town, than to the Germans. The houses look more derelict there, and incomes are lower, but because of lower costs, the living there is better. On the other side of the river the economy is powering ahead at more than 6 per cent a year, while in eastern Germany it is going nowhere. And the people of Shubice have one thing the Frankfurters lack: work - even if they have to commute to Frankfurt for it.

At the foot of the bridge, Günther Mähler, a 62-year-old newspaper boy, greets day-trippers with fresh copies of a Berlin tabloid. He gets no salary, only commission on the number of papers he sells. But at least he has a job of a kind.

"There is nothing here," he says. "After the 'Wende' [the collapse of East Germany], all the factories closed because they had no orders. A Pole needs DM5-6 an hour to get by. In Germany, with these prices and rents, a German needs to earn DM20-25. So all the jobs went to Poland."

There is work on the build-



BRANDENBURG
Area: 29,056 km²
Population: 2.6m

ing sites - like all over eastern Germany, the town has had an impressive facelift - but most goes to the Poles. There are too few up-market customers for the glittering shops in the ultra-modern mall. The new European University provides some employment, but not enough to keep the locals busy. Frankfurt, an industrial town of 80,000, no longer has an industry.

With so much time on their hands and so little hope, many of the local youths have shaved their heads and taken to wearing black uniforms. As in much of Brandenburg, neo-Nazi activity is soaring. According to a poll taken last week, one in ten in Brandenburg is prepared to vote for the extreme right in the coming elections.

The majority of the popula-

tion do not believe, however, that everything is the fault of foreigners. But despite the obvious improvements, a vast proportion feel that the way German reunification was carried through was a disaster. The ailing local economy had no protection against skilful Western concerns. And now the town cannot even protect itself against the resurgent Poles.

The person who will take blame for all that is the "Chancellor of German Unity", Helmut Kohl. At the time of unification, the opposition Social Democrats carped about the speed and the costs, but nobody listened. Now people remember, and the East is turning red. Even in elections to the Brandenburg Land assembly four years ago, the Social Democrats scooped more than half the votes, and Chancellor Kohl's party finished neck and neck with the ex-Communist PDS.

This time round, Mr Kohl will not be so lucky. His party faces the utter humiliation of being beaten into a distant third place by remnants of the leaders of a country they helped abolish.

It was German reunification and the gratitude of the East Germans that helped to elect Mr Kohl in 1990 and 1994. Now, with society atomised and the economy in tatters, the East is set to deliver an altogether different verdict.



Workers in the Kurobe Tunnel in Toyama, Japan, harvest ice stalagmites for use at the M-Wave ice rink. In September, 36 tons of the artificially grown ice will be sliced into 500,000 7mm-thick slivers and laid on the ice rink in an attempt to give it the fastest surface in the world.

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Will the last guest turn out the lights...

THE VIEW from the Kabul International Hotel is still one of the best in Asia. From its balconies you look out, over the tops of pine trees, to see almost all of Afghanistan's capital laid out below. The ochre walls of the Bala Hissar fort - under which a British army camped more than 150 years ago - rise up from among the low, flat buildings, many of which are in ruins. In the distance are bleak, dusty hills that turn red at sundown.

The view has been part of Mohammed Ghaffar's life for 29 years, ever since he started work as a telephone operator at the hotel when it was opened by King Zahir Shah's prime minister on 2 September, 1969. In just under two weeks Ghaffar, now proud to be the front office manager, will mark the anniversary with a small prayer.

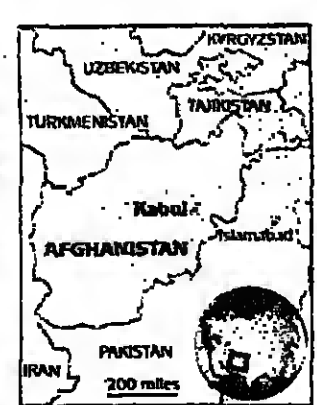
"It only seems fair," he said. "After all, the hotel and I have gone through a lot together."

However, the hotel shows its past in a way that Ghaffar, with his ready smile, creased brown skin, new turban and clean, pressed clothes, does not. Of the 300 rooms, less than a tenth are in working order and most of the windows, blown out by explosions, are covered in plastic sheeting. There is rarely more than a single guest.

And like an old woman who has not changed her wardrobe for 30 years, the hotel is like an apparition from another age. There can be few collectors of Seventies kitsch who would be prepared to trek this far, but if they did they would be richly rewarded.

The smoked glass globe lamps still hang above the plastic wood veneer tables in the Banyan Brasserie - named after a nearby province that is currently the scene of heavy fighting. The swirls of the green and blue floral curtains still clash horrendously with the orange carpet in Le Cavalier lounge bar and the sign pointing the way to the defunct basement beauty salon, sauna and "businessman's center" is unchanged but for some

FRONTLINE KABUL INTERNATIONAL HOTEL



scrawled graffiti reading: "Islamie Revolution, Long Live the Taliban". The only thing missing is the piped music.

Ghaffar remembers very different times. "When we opened we had a great big party," he said. "The hotel was absolutely packed. The ballroom was full to overflowing and there was drinking and dancing all night."

The hotel, Ghaffar said, was built by the American PanAm corporation and was known throughout central Asia as a place to have a good time.

"We had the Pamir roof-top restaurant with a swimming pool and a bar with Italian bar staff who knew how to make all the latest cocktails. We had a Sri Lankan jazz band up there playing every night until 2am and often the best bands from Russia or the Middle East would be hired for a week or so."

"The men would all wear suits and the women used to wear these miniskirts and they used to drink so much that sometimes we had to carry them back to their rooms."

Now, of course, things are very different in Kabul. The Taliban have banned all alcohol and ordered that women cover themselves from head to foot in the tent-like burqa when they leave their homes. Dancing and music are for-

bidden. Vicious police from the absurdly named Ministry for the Prevention of Vice and the Promotion of Virtue enforce the law with lashings, beatings and instant imprisonment.

It is a while since the hotel has seen any partying. The good times effectively finished when the Russians invaded in 1979, although the hotel - now run by Afghans - remained busy. Eastern Bloc diplomats and trade delegations from Marxist regimes all over the world joined Russian bureaucrats and generals in its slightly damp corridors. The tourist posters still remain, peeling gently.

"But the Russians were different. They just liked to sit around and drink vodka and sing songs," Ghaffar said. "Business was still good, though. When the management was pleased with us we used to go off into the countryside for a picnic laid on for all the staff."

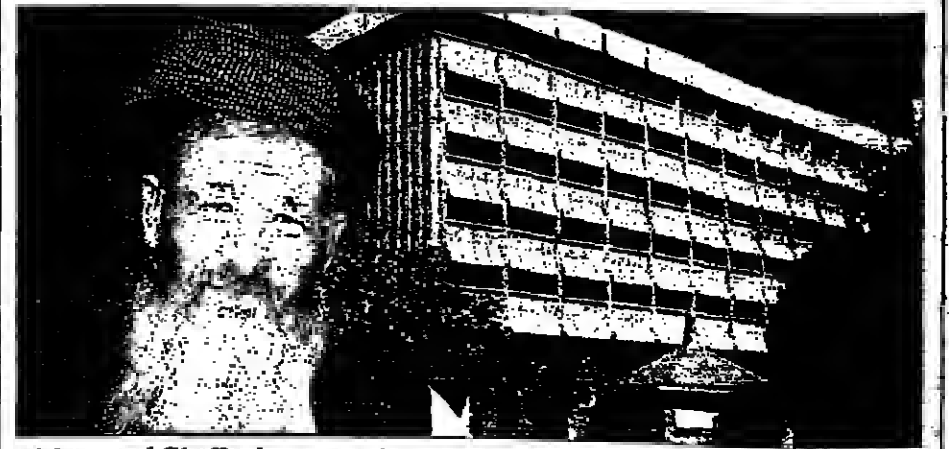
By 1992 the Russians had gone and the mujahedins had fought their way into Kabul. One former guest remembers barefoot soldiers sleeping on the floor in reception, their weapons spread around them and commanders, arriving in the capital after years in the hills, demanding lunch from flustered waiters.

As fighting between rival factions broke out, the situation deteriorated. There were no guests and the hotel's hill-top location attracted rockets instead of sightseers.

"I spent a lot of time in the basement," said Ghaffar who thinks he is about 55. "A rocket destroyed the swimming pool and the roof-top restaurant and another killed three of my friends when it landed in the fountain outside the front door. It knocked down the dogposts as well."

"But what I am proudest of is that I have never left Kabul. Everyone else has gone for at least some time but I have been here through everything. The hotel and I have watched nine regimes come and go," he said, counting them off on his fingers.

JASON BURKE



Mohammed Ghaffar has seen nine regimes come and go

Jason Burke

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

Steel group to axe 1,000 jobs

THE STEEL group Avesta Sheffield 51 per cent owned by British Steel, yesterday revealed plans to axe 1,000 jobs over the next two years as a direct result of poor market conditions blamed on the Asia crisis. Stuart Pettifor, managing director, said that it was essential that costs were brought down to the same level as the company's competitors as he reported losses of \$41m (£25m) in the first three months of the financial year to 30 June.

Nike seeks Sainsbury's injunction

THE UK division of Nike, the US sportswear company, said it would seek a High Court injunction against Sainsbury's Savacentre today to stop it selling goods Nike believes are counterfeit.

In a fixed warning to Savacentre on Tuesday, Nike said it demanded that the retailer remove allegedly counterfeit goods from its hypermarkets by the end of yesterday. The move is the latest in a series of disputes between designer goods companies and supermarkets. In May the US designer, Tommy Hilfinger, asked the High Court to stop Tesco selling allegedly counterfeit clothes. Tesco claims they are authentic. In July, British retailers were barred by the European Court of Justice from buying designer goods outside the European Union on the so-called "grey market."

Health risk warning on water

COMPETITION IN the water industry could put customers' health at risk and lead to huge rises in bills for rural customers, Britain's water companies said yesterday. In a letter to the government Water UK, the industry body, sharply criticised proposals by Ian Byatt, director general of the regulator Ofwat, to open up the market for water. Mr Byatt has said in press interviews that he wants to introduce more competition among privatised water firms, mirroring moves in the gas and electricity markets. The water companies argued that Mr Byatt's intention to set up "common carriage" - allowing companies to pump water into a rival firm's pipelines - for large business customers could lead to a deterioration in water quality. They said that the risk of the outbreak of diseases would be increased by the mixture of different types of water in the pipes and by the arrival of new entrants with less demanding safety standards. An Ofwat spokeswoman rejected Water UK's criticisms.

Outlook, page 15

Rouble crash: US banking shares slide as big players find Russian paper is worthless

Russian crisis hits banks

By ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

CONCERN about the damage being wrought by Russia's financial crisis to the health of the Western banking system mounted yesterday after Credit Suisse First Boston, the Wall Street investment bank admitted it had lost at least \$254m in Russia since its half-year ended on 30 June.

The admission, less than a fortnight before its parent Credit Suisse was set to announce half-year results, came after rumours that Russia had defaulted on a bond payment due yesterday, sparking fears of a wholesale default. Reports that other big banks had sustained serious losses as a result of the \$40bn debt restructuring announced on Tuesday night sent bank shares tumbling worldwide.

With the crisis in Moscow deepening, stock markets around the world were again on the slide. The FTSE closed down 109 points at 5545.4, while in New York the Dow was off 65 at 8537.26. Equity markets in Europe and Asia were also showing big falls.

Particularly badly hit in the sell-off were some of the big US banks who are known to have been big players in the Russian debt market. Much of that debt is now virtually worthless following Tuesday's restructuring of the \$40bn short-term government debt.

On Wall Street the biggest fallers included Chase Manhattan, Citicorp and Lehman who are all known to have been active in trading in Russian short-term debt.

Traders also said that Goldman Sachs, which earlier this week filed for a \$30bn listing,



The face of Russian despair: A Muscovite drawing his money out of a bank as the rouble crashed on world markets yesterday and the Russian central bank said it could not afford further intervention

was rumoured to have sustained big losses in Russia, as has Salomon Smith Barney. Goldman said last night that its exposure was absolutely minimal and pointed out that the bank, which three weeks ago handed a first attempt at restructuring the GKO market, had said it had had a number of successful mandates out there.

"It is not surprising that

competitors are seeking to undermine our success," said a Goldman spokesman. The gloom in the banking sector was also compounded by the decision by the debt rating agency Standard & Poor's to strip Deutsche Bank of its coveted Triple A status. The decision reflected broader concerns about the bank's business mix and the failure to make a go of its

attempts to build a global investment bank. However, these subtleties were lost in markets which were very nervous about Russia. "There are a lot of rumours going around at the moment, said one trader. "The numbers go up and down like a yo-yo." The Credit Suisse statement issued in Zurich yesterday said the bank would still announce a half-year profit of \$754m for

CSFB when it publishes its figures for the first six months on 9 September. However, it pointed that since then unaudited net profit had fallen to \$500m for the year to date. John Leonard, analyst at Salomon Smith Barney, said the figures implied that CSFB, one of the biggest players in the Russian debt market, had probably lost around \$350m in the latest debacle.

Fear over debt worsens

FEARS OF a default by Russia on its \$140bn debt mounted last night as the rouble plunged 40 per cent against the mark and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin flew to the Ukraine for a crisis meeting with the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Michel Camdessus, writes Andrew Garfield.

As the air of crisis mounted in Moscow, with top department stores closing their doors to jack up prices, the Central Bank which said it had spent at total of \$8.8bn since July to shore up the currency abandoned all pretence of a managed devaluation and threw in the towel completely.

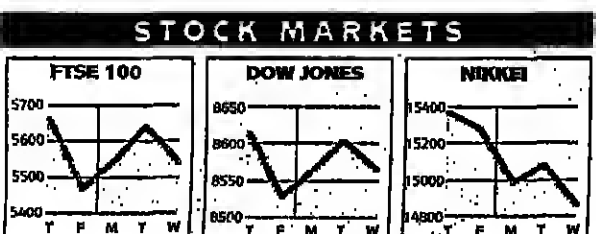
Dollar trading was yesterday suspended and all trades declared null and void. The authorities also withdrew a banking licence from one of the country's biggest banks AB Imperial.

"There is a real possibility that the Russian government will default on its external debt obligations," said David Riley analyst at Fitch IBCA the debt rating agency.

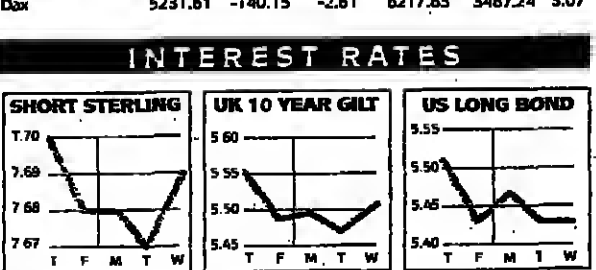
IBCA had earlier downgraded all Russian debt to CCC, its lowest possible grade.

The IMF agreed a \$2.6bn bailout package last month. Prospects of further Western aid are slim.

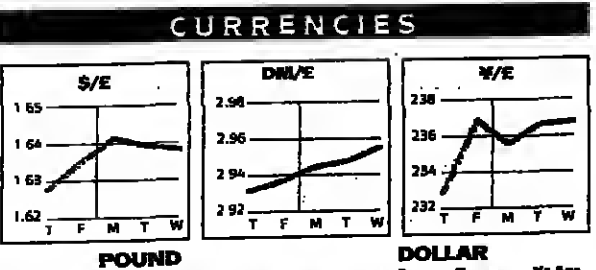
Germany's finance minister Theo Waigel said yesterday it was up to Russia to sort itself out.



Index	Close	Change	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5545.40	-109.00	6183.70	4282.80	3.58
FTSE 250	9023.60	-76.70	10000.00	5970.90	4.01
FTSE 350	2653.90	-50.10	2969.10	2141.80	3.63
FTSE All Share	2576.02	-48.11	2886.52	2106.59	3.66
FTSE SmallCap	2251.40	-34.40	2753.90	2231.60	3.68
FTSE RealIndex	1234.10	-15.90	1517.10	1225.20	4.10
FTSE AIM	963.20	-14.30	1146.90	895.90	1.39
FTSE FSI/OC 100	964.11	-28.50	1146.90	895.90	1.39
Dow Jones	8537.26	-65.00	9367.84	6971.32	1.73
Nikkei	14865.03	-206.90	18866.79	14488.21	1.03
Hang Seng	7834.40	-55.60	13704.08	6344.79	5.18
Dax	5231.61	-140.15	6217.83	3487.24	3.07



Index	3 months	6 months	1 year	2 year	3 year	5 year	10 year	15 year	20 year
UK	7.76	6.45	7.63	0.01	5.50	1.59	5.17	1.84	1.21
US	5.69	6.04	5.69	-0.38	5.22	1.15	5.43	1.21	1.21
Japan	0.64	0.07	0.64	-0.02	1.37	-0.88	1.91	-0.88	-0.88
Germany	3.48	0.18	3.66	-0.01	4.29	-1.41	5.10	-1.29	-1.29



Index	Close	Change	Yr Ago	Index	Close	Change	Yr Ago
Dollar	1.6390	-0.08	1.6125	Sterling	0.6101	+0.03	0.6202
D-Mark	2.9585	+0.88	2.8977	D-Mark	1.8059	+0.82	1.7973
Yen	236.44	-11.24	190.47	Yen	144.38	-0.56	118.15
E index	105.60	+0.00	101.60	S index	115.40	0.00	105.50

Index	Close	Change	Yr Ago	Index	Close	Change	Yr Ago
Street Oil (\$)	12.20	-0.17	18.00	GDP	115.40	2.60	112.48
Gold (\$)	283.65	0.50	325.90	RPI	163.00	3.50	157.49
Silver (\$)	4.97	-0.11	4.65	Base Rates	7.50	7.00	

Index	Close	Change	Yr Ago	Index	Close	Change	Yr Ago
Australia (\$)	2.7578			Mexican (nuevo peso)	14.00		
Austria (schillings)	20.11			Netherlands (guilders)	3.1994		
Belgium (francs)	59.13			New Zealand (\$)	3.2267		
Canada (\$)	2.4738			Norway (krone)	12.63		
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8372			Portugal (escudos)	250.64		
Denmark (krone)	10.96			Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.9623		
Finland (markka)	8.7594			Singapore (S)	2.7539		
France (francs)	9.6051			Spain (pesetas)	242.62		
Germany (marks)	2.8737			South Africa (rand)	9.8424		
Greece (drachma)	488.99			Sweden (krone)	13.27		
Hong Kong (\$)	12.30			Switzerland (francs)	2.4006		
Ireland (pounds)	1.1352			Thailand (bahts)	61.72		
India (rupees)	63.97			Turkey (liras)	437.983		
Israel (shekels)	5.6202			USA (\$)	1.5998		
Italy (lira)	2839						
Japan (yen)	232.37						
Malaysia (ringgits)	6.5178						
Malta (lira)	0.6255						

Allied Carpets plunges 29% on market return

ALLIED CARPETS yesterday admitted that the accounting irregularities that have resulted in a \$3m charge to profits had been going on for five years and were only discovered after one of its shop workers telephoned the company's auditors.

By NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

In almost all its 258 stores without the knowledge of the board. As analysts said the group was now vulnerable to a bid, Allied's directors said they would be considering the position of all its advisers that brought the company to the stock market two years ago at a price of 215p per share. Particular focus is likely to be placed on the role

of Arthur Andersen, the group's auditors, which failed to uncover the problem. The company laid the blame squarely on Steve Barber, its senior operations director who instigated the scheme. He directed store managers to book sales when orders had been placed and the money taken rather than as the carpets were fitted, as was company policy. The effect was to drag forward sales which would otherwise have fallen into the subsequent accounting period.

Though Allied said there was "no evidence of personal financial gain", the managing director, Ray Nethercott, conceded that the group's aggressive culture of driving branches to achieve set targets could have been a factor. "We have to look at a culture that led people to this kind of action," he said. Two directors have resigned over the issue, it was announced

last week. David Pout, finance director, receives a payoff of £221,000, although he had no knowledge of the problem. Mr Barber resigned after being suspended due to his role in the affair. However, analysts questioned the justification of his £156,000 settlement. Mr Nethercott, who said he was "grieved" by the discovery, said he had considered offering his resignation but had been persuaded not to by the board.

Julian Lee, the chairman, added that the board now considered the matter closed and no action would be taken against any employees. Allied Carpets' interim results, announced yesterday, showed a sharp fall in profits from £18.7m to £11.2m, including a £3m charge to cover the accounting irregularities. Like-for-like sales fell by 4 per cent and are still down by 1 per cent in current trading.

Royal Ordnance faces closure as MoD sales slump to £150m

By FRANCESCO GUERRERA

BRITISH AEROSPACE may have to close down its Royal Ordnance ammunition division, putting more than 4,000 jobs at risk, unless sales pick up sharply in the next 12 months. Sources close to the defence contractor said yesterday that the future of the business was in jeopardy because it could not afford to compete with state-subsidised foreign rivals.

An MoD spokesman said that although the Government had "a strong strategic interest in the future of the UK ammunition industry, Royal Ordnance's survival will depend on its ability to remain competitive and win orders in the UK and overseas."

Royal Ordnance has already undergone a major shake-up since being bought by British Aerospace in 1987. Since then BAe has closed five plants and cut its workforce from 19,000 to just over 4,000. The staff operates from 12 sites around the country, including plants in Lancashire, Nottingham, Durham and Wolverhampton. They manufacture propellants and shells for tanks and rifles.

Earlier this year the company cut 100 jobs in Nottingham and said it would shut down a plant in Walsingham which employs 57 people. The latest crisis is part of a widespread slump in the global ammunition industry which has been squeezed by tighter defence budgets in Europe and a fall in Asian demand. Experts claim that defence spending among European nations has fallen by around 40 per cent since the late 1980s, while the number of suppliers has remained constant.

This has forced a number of firms to turn to export markets in the Middle East and South-east Asia, where they face stiff competition from state-owned suppliers.

They added that sales to the Ministry of Defence, Royal Ordnance's biggest customer, have collapsed in the past decade as a swathe of orders went to cheaper, state-backed competitors. A merger with the German defence group, Rheinmetall, was being discussed as a possible solution to Royal Ordnance's plight, the company said.

"Life in the UK ammunition business is very tough. Sales to the MoD went from £350m 10 years ago to £150m as state-backed firms from South Africa, South Korea, China and Israel entered the market. Talks with the Germans are at a very early stage, but a joint venture is a possibility," the sources said.

Despite Royal Ordnance's attempts to increase its export sales, which have doubled in the past 10 years and now account for 60 per cent of turnover, MoD orders remained crucial to the division's survival, the company said.

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON
ANOTHER disastrous day for the Russian rouble and weak Far Eastern markets halted the stock market rally. Footsie slumped 100 points to 5,545.4 with only 11 constituents managing to move ahead. The mid cap index fell back to its February level and the small cap collapsed to another year's low. But trading was not heavy. Smiths Industries, a beneficiary of the British Aerospace/Airbus Industrie deal, rose 22p to 675p.
Derek Pain, page 17

NEW YORK
US STOCKS fell as the Russian rouble swap plan forced investors to take huge losses, adding to concerns that instability in emerging markets will slow US corporate profit growth. The Dow Jones fell 62.8 points to 8,537.26 by early afternoon US time. However, Adobe Systems bucked the downward trend, rising as much as 9.4 per cent after rejecting an unsolicited bid from a rival desktop publishing software maker, Quark.

TOKYO
STOCKS fell for the fourth time in five days on concern opposition parties' resistance to the government's financial bills will stymie progress on reviving Japan's ailing banking system. The opposition, which will submit alternative proposals, boycotted yesterday's debate in parliament on the government-drafted bank bills, and will meet the ruling Liberal Democratic Party today. The Nikkei 225 stock index shed 114.89 points or 0.76 per cent to 14,958.04.

MOSCOW
STOCKS and bonds plunged and the central bank halted sales of dollars to banks after the government unveiled a plan that forces investors to accept huge losses on government debt totalling 250bn roubles. The benchmark RTS index fell 13.5 per cent to 76.26. Russia's dollar-denominated Eurobonds maturing 2001 also slumped: they now yield 57 percentage points more than US Treasury bonds of comparable maturities.

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Thursday 27 August 1948

Key
X = ex-dividend
Copies of the most recent earnings rep

Allied advisers deserve a carpeting

ALLIED CARPETS is looking more threadbare by the minute. When the problem of "early recognition of sales" first surfaced last month, the board was quick to play down the scale of the problem. Don't worry, directors said, the scam was only evident in a handful of stores over a limited period, and anyway there was no monetary loss since it was confined to orders already paid for. Not only that but a round of applause, please, for our slouch-like auditors Arthur Andersen, who sniffed out the ruse during their twice yearly audit.

What a difference six weeks makes. Now we learn that the practice was going on in virtually all the group's 254 stores for fully five years. Furthermore the plunkers at Arthur Andersen didn't have a clue what was going on until one of the company's store staff telephoned to tell them. Before getting too harsh with our strictures it ought to be said that on the Richter scale of great accounting scams, this barely registers one. The profits hit is only £3m, there is, as yet, no evidence of personal financial gain, and the offense committed is not nearly as bad as other recent cases in the retail sector, notably Wickes.



OUTLOOK

All the same, coming so soon after the due diligence that was supposed to have gone into the company's flotation prospectus, it's bad enough. The two directors who have gone over the affair have done so clutching their obligatory redundancy cheques. Just what does a director have to do to get fired without compensation these days. Steve Barber, the manager who directed the stores to change the way sales were recognised (without taking the trouble to tell the board) walks away with £156,000 - the ostensible purpose being to tie him to a non-competition clause because "he would be immediately snapped up by a competitor". Oh really?

But the wider questions here relate to the conduct of the board and its advisors. The claim by directors that they had no knowledge of the scam does not absolve them of responsibility. Ignorance is not much of an excuse. That all this went unnoticed for so long doesn't say much for the quality of the group's controls and systems.

And what of the advisers who brought this company to the stock market two years ago at four times the price the shares now change hands for. Step forward, Barings, sponsors to the issue, Hoare Govett, the stockbrokers, and Arthur Andersen, the auditors. Andersen's, which was also auditor in the Wickes fiasco, should stand at the very least be considering its position.

Competition is good for water

THE WATER industry makes some reasonable enough points in challenging Ian Byatt over his plans to introduce competition into the water industry. But as usual it has chosen the wrong issue on which to

attack the regulator.

This is an industry doggedly intent on resisting change. It's had to be dragged kicking and screaming through every reform in its inglorious history. Every time something worthwhile is proposed, it puts up objections, warns of dire consequences and insists that it just cannot be done. The worst example of this mulish response to change was the industry's ridiculous campaign against the creation of the National Rivers Authority in the late 1980s.

Only the water companies could believe it would be possible to privatise an industry with all its public responsibility for protecting the water environment intact. And yet the industry attacked proposals to separate these functions and keep them in the public sector as unworkable and disastrous.

It seems to be adopting a similar stance on competition. Mr Byatt is apparently "opening a Pandora's box" simply by discussing the issue. Rural dwellers will see their water bills soar and all manner of nasty infections will spread around the country like wildfire.

What nonsense. Of course a great deal more work needs to be done

on the practicalities of so-called "common carriage" - the idea that each regional water company's pipes should be available for use by all the others. And of course it is not nearly as easy to introduce competition into water provision as it is with telecoms, electricity and gas.

Even so, the concept seems to have much to commend it. One positive effect would be the creation of a national water grid, which would at least help guarantee movement of water from low cost areas with surplus water to high cost ones with a deficit. Competition is always a good thing. It makes companies work harder for their customers and is the best guarantee of efficient pricing. There are no exceptions to this rule, not even with water.

Royal Ordnance firing blanks

QUESTION - WHICH two companies have produced more aircraft in Britain than any other? If you thought the answer was British Aerospace, or its predecessor com-

panies, you would be wrong. The answer is the once separate car makers, Austin and Morris. Nearly all Britain's aircraft making capacity was closed between the two great wars with the result that come 1939, the only option was for Austin and Morris to cease car production and go full time into making Spitfires and Hurricanes.

You have been warned, British Aerospace might say. BAE yesterday issued the Government with an ultimatum: the company will close its Royal Ordnance factories, leaving Britain without a munitions industry, unless it gets some guaranteed orders from the Ministry of Defence. The globe looks a pretty threatening place right now, but it is not immediately apparent that world war three is about to break out. Even so, BAE does have a point.

There is little purpose in BAE spending large amounts of money developing state of the art bullets and munitions if the military's needs are eventually going to be catered for by low-cost overseas producers. Dual sourcing for defence orders was introduced by Peter Levene when he was in charge of defence procurement in the mid 1980s. Up to a point it suc-

ceeded in its purpose of driving down costs, but it was always likely to result in just the sort of problem BAE is now complaining of. The new Government has already proved a softer touch than its predecessor on launch aid. BAE is gambling it will be the same on defence procurement.

Sugar's going to miss his goals

SO ALAN SUGAR has had enough of football and Tottenham Hotspur, has he? Since he became involved, the club has been a lot more successful off the pitch than on it. Even though on present form it's going to drop out of the Premier League, it remains one of the most profitable clubs around. Still, football is more about winning than money, and out of the Premier League it won't long remain the moneyspinner it now is. Nobody's going to pay Mr Sugar's reputed \$60 a share asking price. Certainly Joe Lewis, who through ENIC is the only potential buyer now in the frame, isn't going to. If Mr Sugar wants out, he's going to have to lower his expectations.

IN BRIEF

Lloyd's expulsion after tribunal

LLOYD'S OF London insurance market yesterday expelled a former senior executive of Bain Hogg, a leading Lloyd's company, for what it described as "thoroughly dishonest behaviour".

Michael James Cowie was expelled, fined £80,000 and ordered to pay costs of £17,578 after findings of misconduct by Lloyd's Disciplinary Tribunal.

Loophole closed

THE TAKEOVER Panel said yesterday it had removed the "creeping provision" from its rules, closing a loophole which allowed large shareholders to gain majority control without making an offer to all shareholders.

The provision allowed shareholders with between 30 and 50 per cent of a company to buy up to 1 per cent of the company's shares over a year without triggering the main panel rule, which says an increase to above 29.9 per cent must trigger a full offer.

20 IFAs fined

A FURTHER 20 independent financial advisers (IFAs) have been fined a total of £75,000, and two more reprimanded, in connection with pensions mis-selling, the Personal Investment Authority said yesterday. The watchdog said the firms had failed to take all reasonable steps to meet the December 1997 deadline to complete 90 per cent of their most urgent cases in the personal pensions review.

US orders soar

US ORDERS for big-ticket goods posted their largest gain in eight months in July, a sign that domestic spending is outweighing reduced overseas demand for US-made products.

Orders for durable goods - anything from appliances and computers to commercial aircraft expected to be used for several years - rose by 2.4 per cent last month, topping June's 0.2 per cent increase, the Commerce Department said.

Excluding the transport sector, orders for durable goods rose by 3 per cent in July, the largest gain in nearly a year.

Who funds IMF if it runs out of cash?

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

WHEN A BANK runs out of money to lend, it represents a crisis for borrowers. When a central bank runs out of money, that is more serious still; it is a crisis for a nation, and anybody else who is financially exposed to that country. But what happens when the central bank's central bank runs out of cash?

That is precisely what seems to be happening to the International Monetary Fund. After rescue packages for Indonesia, Korea, and Russia, it is running short of cash, and plans to boost its resources have run into heavy opposition from the richest and politically most influential member: the US.

Elsewhere doubts are being expressed about whether the cash is being well spent. German Finance Minister Theo Waigel said yesterday it was not possible for the IMF or anyone else to fix Russia's problems. It was up to the Russian government to take action.

For Michel Camdessus, IMF Managing Director, the stakes could hardly be higher. Questions are being asked about the value of the institution - and its member governments, particularly the US and Germany, are under political pressure to rethink their attitude.

As Mr Camdessus sets out for crucial meetings with Russia and Ukraine, the Fund's available assets are at an historic low point. Next month the IMF's annual conference looks set to be a fiery event...

News Analysis: The US is the biggest political player in the Fund; Congress has been asked to stump up \$18bn more for the coffers

It is ridiculously difficult to try to calculate the IMF's financial position. "It is not possible in a timely manner to determine from publicly available resources what resources IMF has available for operations," Harold Johnson, an official at America's General Accounting Office told Congress last month, and he should know, because he has produced the best available estimate.

Mr Johnson calculates that the IMF has a total of about \$195bn in currency holdings provided by quota subscriptions from its 182 members. Of these, however, a significant chunk comes from countries whose currencies are not strong enough to allow their currencies to be used for lending, leaving about \$130bn. Of that, about \$70bn has already been used for credit arrangements, and a further \$17bn is committed, leaving \$43bn for operations.

That sum must in turn be adjusted to take account of necessary reserves - which is where the real theology comes in. The IMF retains reserves to allow for liquidity in its foreign exchange transactions, as a precaution against strong currencies suddenly becoming weak currencies, and to permit countries with strong currencies to draw on their quotas if

they need to. According to two different formulae, that left anything between \$8bn and \$31bn available to the IMF at the end of July; after the last Russian bailout, the sum available was even less.

Comments from officials at the Fund and the US Treasury indicate that the figure is well toward the bottom end of this scale, at about \$10bn. As the old saying goes in Washington, a billion here, a billion there and pretty soon you're talking real money; but \$10bn is, in terms of the crisis faced by Russia and the potential needs of other nations, a drop in the ocean. After all, Russia unloaded over \$4bn in a few days in defence of its currency.

"We are in grave difficulties," said Stanley Fischer, the first deputy Managing Director, last month. "After these loans, the liquidity ratio is below the number we feel comfortable with." It has gone below 30 per cent, the lowest since the late 70s.

There are other ways that the IMF can find money, and it has already started using them. Last month it touched the General Arrangement to Borrow, a reserve tank, to finance its Russian package, the first time it has been used since the 70s when it helped prop up Britain, Italy and (ironically) the US.

It could sell off gold reserves,

or touch some of its more affluent members for extra loans. The IMF has been passing the bat around and had expected to have more cash coming in, but this particular cheque is still in the post. To kick off its New Arrangement to Borrow, it needs the approval of, above all, the US; and that's where the trouble gets worse.

The US is the predominant political player in the Fund, and because so many of the members have currencies that cannot be used internationally, it has a disproportionate financial stake as well. The US share of the IMF's usable resources is over 25 per cent. The White House has asked Congress to stump up an extra \$18bn-\$14.5bn of it to add to its quota, and \$3.5bn for the NAB. But though the Senate has approved the cash, the House of Representatives is resisting.

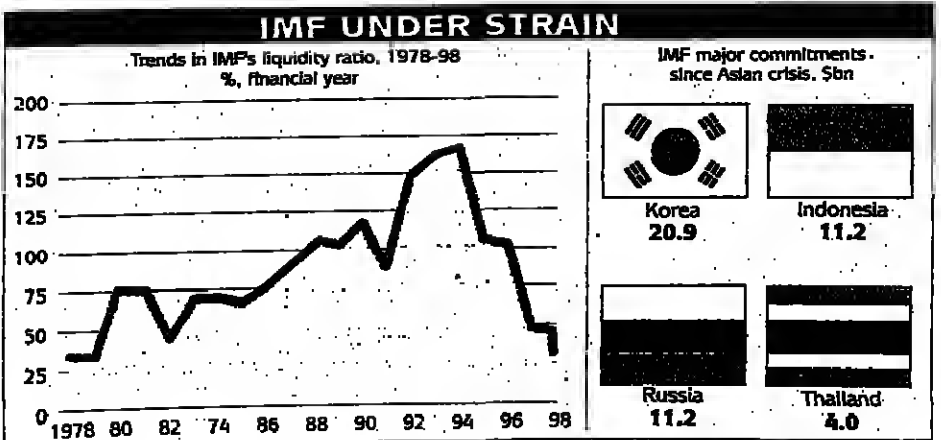
Partly, this is scepticism about just how much the Fund needs new cash. "The alleged impoverishment of the IMF is more than a bit exaggerated," says Jim Saxton, the Republican Congressman who chairs the Joint Economic Committee.

With the Fund so notoriously reticent about its own affairs, and suspicion of international organisations in the US deeply rooted, he has struck a chord. The \$8bn figure has been widely bandied, but Mr Fischer used the higher \$31bn figure last month, confusing the IMF's case further. Anyway, Mr Saxton says, the IMF could start commercial borrowing, like anybody else.

A more fundamental criticism of the Fund is at large in Washington. The Russian package, for instance, went from the coffers of the IMF, to Moscow, and virtually directly back to Western banks who were speculating against the ruble and Russian bonds. Now it is those very same banks who are worried that Russia will slip down the toilet, leaving them further exposed. Equally, Russia took the money from the IMF but has failed to deliver on the kinds of fundamental reform which critics believe would restore confidence. The IMF is accused of promoting moral hazard by inviting reckless behaviour.



Michel Camdessus, the IMF managing director, is having to field questions about the value of the institution as he sets out to help Russia and Ukraine



Trade plunges £5.7bn into the red

BRITAIN'S TRADE in goods and services was £5.7bn in deficit in the first half of this year, the largest half-yearly deficit since 1990.

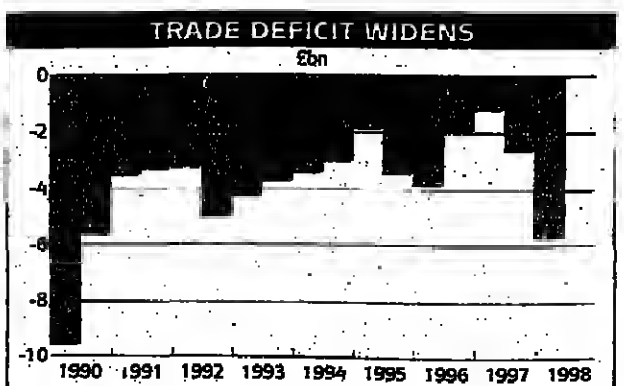
According to the Office for National Statistics the deficit is widening, with exports flat and imports rising. The latest figures published yesterday showed some improvement in the deficit in the latest quarter, with the deficit put at £764m compared with £1.2bn in May. But officials said this was mainly due to movements in erratic items such as precious stones and aircraft. Leaving aside oil and aircraft, the deficit in the first half

BY STEVE LEVINSON

was £10.5bn, which was only partly offset by a surplus on trade in services of £2.7bn.

The overall picture confirms fears of exporters over the strength of the pound. But they also face other problems in different markets: exports to the European Union, where economic activity is gaining strength, were up by 2.5 per cent in the latest quarter, while exports to the rest of the world fell by 3.5 per cent.

Officials attributed this to the slowdown in Asia. Similarly, imports from the EU were up



while those from elsewhere were down. The breakdown of exports

showed that only finished manufactures and fuel increased, while all other commodity

groups fell. On the import side there were increases across the board apart from basic materials.

Figures for July are only available for non-EU countries and showed little change from June.

If present trends continue the deficit in goods and services is heading towards £12bn for 1998 as a whole. The Treasury forecast for the year is for a current account deficit of £6.5bn after including invisible items such as profits earned overseas. Current account totals for the second quarter are due to be published next month.

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INDUSTRIAL METALS									
LME (\$/tonne)	Cash	Chng	3 months	Chng	LME\$/oz	Chng			
Aluminum Hg 1322.5	1323.5	-7.00	1344.	1344.5	-6.5	4549.00	0		
Aluminum Alloy 1150	1159	1172	1172	1172	1172	380	0		
Aluminum Alloy 1622	1623	-11.00	1631	1632	-10	2973.75	1700		
Nickel 525.5	526.5	-3.00	535.5	536	-3	1164.75	-75		
Lead 4070	4080	-5.00	4135	4140	-5	957.36	-156		
Zinc 5595	5605	-5.00	5645	5650	-5	2140	0		
Tin 1013.5	1016.5	-7.50	1037	1038	-6.5	3704.75	-62.5		

PRECIOUS METALS									
pm fix\$/oz per	Day's Year's	pm fix\$/oz per	Chng	Chng	Coins (\$)	Year's			
chng	chng	Year's	chng	chng		chng			
Platinum 360.0-6.00-46.00	Platinum 220.05-3.20-31.35	Reug/hands 289.95	-37.75						
Palladium 283.00-7.00 96.50	Palladium 173.00-3.90 49.40	Spot 71.38							
Silver 4.97-0.11 0.31	Silver 3.03-0.06 0.15	Nobles 38.80							
Gold 283.15 0.10-42.35		Maple Leaf 704.95	-42.38						

AGRICULTURAL AT 5:30PM									
Cocoa	Coffee	Barley	Potatoes	Lge Potatoes					
USFFE L/zone	USFFE L/zone	USFFE L/zone	USFFE L/zone	ATA 525 Lb					
Mar99\$102.00	Mar99\$101.00	Mar98 \$7.00	Mar98 \$7.00	Apr99 \$42.00					
Apr99\$107.00	Apr99\$106.00	Mar98 \$9.75	Mar98 \$9.75	Apr99 \$76.75					
Nov99\$109.00	Nov99\$155.00	Jan99 71.55	Apr99 169.00	Jun99 53.50					
Walt 0	Walt 0	Walt 0	Walt 0	Walt 0					
White Sugar**	Freight	Wheat	Corn*	Soya Beans*					
USFFE L/zone	USFFE L/zone	USFFE L/zone	CBOT Cents/bush	CBOT 55 Lbs bush					
Oct98 229.00	Oct98 617.00	Mar98 69.50	Mar98 159.75	Apr99 28.60					
Nov98 228.60	Nov98 645.00	Mar98 70.00	Mar98 210.25	Apr98 27.50					
Mar99 233.50	Oct98 015.00	Jan99 73.00	Nov98 210.25	Sep98 50.00					
Walt 0	Walt 0	Walt 0	Walt 0	Walt 0					

OTHER SPOTS AT 5:30PM										
Oct Live Cattle	(CME) \$/lb lb	38.55	Dec	Wheat Mace	(S&P) \$/100 mt	70.00	Oct	Pork Bellies	(CME) \$/100 lb	101.90
Sep	(CME) \$/lb lb	31.15	Nov	Wheat	(CME) \$/100 mt	70.00	Nov	Orange Juice	(CME) \$/50K lb	75.45
Sep	(CME) \$/50K lb	110.35	Dec	Corn	(CME) \$/50K lb	25.45	Dec	Milk	(CME) \$/50K lb	25.45
Sep	(CME) \$/50K lb	16.50	Sep	Cotton Pals	(HLC) \$/5 lb	24.30	Sep	Oats	(CME) \$/50K lb	24.30
Dec	(CME) \$/5K bush	114.25	Dec	Soya Oil	(CME) \$/50K lb	125.00	Dec	Feats	(CME) \$/50K lb	125.00
Nov	(HCE) \$/2.50 ton	305.00		Woolsten Wm	(CME) \$/50K lb	125.00				

SPORT

Cricket: Sir Donald Bradman, Australia's peerless compiler of Test hundreds, reaches another landmark today

90 not out for man of the century

BY JON CULLEY

SIR DONALD BRADMAN, whose ability to make centuries on the cricket field earned him worldwide fame, edges one step closer to another today when he celebrates his 90th birthday at the small house in Adelaide which has been home for two-thirds of his life. A mile or two away, the occasion is being marked by a dinner but Bradman himself had no plans to attend. He has earned the right to peace and privacy now and, it is said, ventures out infrequently.

Bradman's achievements during a career that spanned 21 years set him apart not only as the greatest cricketer of the century but arguably the greatest figure in any sport, such was his dominance and recognition.

Most of the long list of records he set remain unsurpassed: highest Test batting average (99.94); highest career average (95.14); fastest man to 100 hundreds (295 first-class innings next to Denis Compton's 552); most runs in a single day of a Test (309); most runs in a Test series (974); and many more besides.

Of those records he once held that have fallen, his total of 29 Test hundreds has been bettered only by Sunil Gavaskar, who played three times more innings. At his peak, he held the two records Brian Lara now boasts: the highest first-class score (452) and highest Test score (334). His career analysis shows that he made a century, on average, on every third visit to the crease.

Quite apart from his feats with the willow, Bradman enjoys another rare distinction, having been granted the privilege of outliving his obituarists. When, in 1934, at the end of his second tour of England, Bradman lay in a London hospital, editors prepared for the worst. The Australian batsman was suffering from appendicitis and developed life-threatening complications that rendered his condition critical for several days. In the end, happily, the hurriedly written accounts of his life were not required. Some 64 years on, they are still gathering dust.

By then he had done enough already to be placed among the greats. Many of his records had already been achieved and such was his reputation that it was specifically to combat the threat he posed that England employed their notorious "Bodyline" tactic in 1932-33. It was a success in that it restricted his average to 56.67, that of a mere mortal. Bradman's last two innings before the illness struck, at Folkestone and Scarborough, had resulted in hundreds, compiled in a manner that confirmed his genius. His first-class average stood at 90.59.

Although he made, so far as the doctors were concerned, a complete recovery, many doubted he would emerge the same player. He played no cricket at all during the Australian summer of 1934-35. His health was further compromised during the war years, in which he was commissioned as an army physical training supervisor, when he developed fibrositis. However, not only did he continue to gather runs relentlessly, he also became a successful international captain, losing the first two Tests against Gubby Allen's MCC tourists in 1936-37 but winning 15 of the next 22, including the three remaining Tests in that particular Ashes series.

Bradman was born the son of a farmer and carpenter in New South Wales, growing up in the town of Bowral. Anecdote has it that he taught himself to bat by throwing a golf ball



Sir Donald Bradman holds one of the bats with which he forged a sporting legend - including a Test average of 99.94 - at the Bradman Collection in Adelaide during a rare public appearance

Reuters

against a water tank and playing back the rebound with a cricket stump. As a 17-year-old he scored 300 in a match for the Sydney Cricket Ground for trials, after which he made his way through grade cricket to the New South Wales XI - for whom he made 118 on his debut - and into the Australian side by the time he was 20.

At 5ft 7in he was a relatively short man but had good shoulders and nimble movement. Once, astonishingly, his eyesight was described as below average yet he appeared to see the ball earlier in flight than most mortals and was thus able to make swift assessment of which stroke he should employ. His timing of drive, hook and cut was perfect and the flexibility in his wrists enabled him to strike the ball with power.

He retired after the last of his four visits to England, in 1948, when he led an unbeaten Australian side, scoring 138 in the first Test at Trent Bridge and 173 not out in the fourth at Headingley. Then came one of those extraordinary moments in which sport reveals its capacity to humble even those who would be considered almost superhuman. In his 80th and last Test innings, needing to score only four to finish with a Test average of exactly 100, Bradman was bowled by Eric Hollies for a second-ball nought.

After his retirement, when he became the first Australian

cricketer to be knighted, he enjoyed family life and a business career, as well as continuing as a selector until 1971.

Always, however, he protected his privacy, invariably accommodating to those who wrote to him but rarely granting an interview. When he agreed to appear on television two years ago it was only on the understanding that a million Australian dollars be paid into his Foundation Trust, set up to fund the Bradman Museum at Bowral and to provide scholarships for young cricketers.

It was a piece of compulsive viewing for the Australian public and revealed Bradman's mind to have conceded little to advancing years. Touching a wide range of subjects in a two-hour interview, he condemned "sledding" as a practice he would never have tolerated and described Shane Warne as "the best thing to happen to cricket for many years".

Bradman suffered a painful loss a year ago when his wife, Jessie - who he once described as "the best partnership of my life" - died after a long struggle against cancer but his own strength shows no sign of failing. If fate remains kind he may well be asked to light the flame at the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

The postmen in the Kensington Park area of Adelaide where Bradman lives have always needed strong backs. Today, one sack will be nowhere near big enough as the world says, "Happy Birthday, Sir Donald."

THE RECORDS OF SIR DONALD BRADMAN

TEST MATCHES

Highest Test career batting average: 99.94 (next best 61)
Highest series aggregate: 974 (v England 1930)
Most double centuries in a series: 3 (v England 1930)
Most runs in a single day: 309 (v England 1930: 105 before lunch, 115 between lunch and tea, 89 final session)
Most runs against England: 5,028
Fastest double century in a Test: 214min (Leeds, 1930)
Fastest to 2,000 (22 innings): 3,000 (33), 4,000 (48), 5,000 (56) and 6,000 (68) Test runs.
Most Test double hundreds: 12 (next best seven)
Only man to score centuries in 6 consecutive Tests (1937-40)
Highest Test score for two batting positions: 304 v England at No 5 (Leeds, 1934); 270 v England at No 7 (Melbourne, 1936-37)

FIRST-CLASS CRICKET

Highest career average: 95.14 (no other player with 25,000 runs or more above 57)
1,000 runs in a season most times: 16 (12 in Australia, four in England)
Only man to score 1,000 runs in England before 1 June more than once: 1930 (1,001) and 1938 (1,096)
Highest first-class average in an English season: 115.66 (1938)
Highest debut abroad: 236 (v Worcestershire, 1930)
Most double centuries in an English season: 8 (1947-48)
Most centuries in an English season by an overseas player: 13 (1938)
Most career triple hundreds: 37
Fastest man to 100 hundreds: 295 innings (next best Denis Compton, 552)



England's response to the prolific Bradman was the notorious 'Bodyline' tactic in 1932-33

Tributes to 'the greatest living Australian'

BY ROBERT MILLIKEN
in Sydney

JOHN HOWARD, Australia's Prime Minister, yesterday described Sir Donald Bradman as the "greatest living Australian" as he led the tributes to mark the 90th birthday today of the country's legendary cricketer. The high point will be a dinner tonight in Adelaide, Bradman's home city. Hosted by the South Australian Cricket Association, the Grand Bradman Dinner will be attended by some of Australia's leading Test cricketers, past and present, including Shane Warne, Mark Waugh, Greg Chappell, Rodney Marsh and David Hookes.

There will be 1,150 guests, and the event is expected to raise A\$100,000 (£35,000) for the expansion of the Bradman Collection, which includes some of Sir Donald's own cricketing memorabilia, in the State Library of South Australia.

The most glaring absentee from the dinner will be Bradman himself. He politely declined, as he does to almost

every invitation. Instead, he is expected to have a quiet dinner with members of his family at his Adelaide home.

Sachin Tendulkar, the Indian player who is ranked the world's leading batsman, was due to arrive in Australia last night for the official dinner at the Adelaide Convention Centre. There were reports that Tendulkar would have a private meeting with Bradman at his home before the dinner, and that Shane Warne would accompany him.

Bradman said in a rare television interview in 1996 that Tendulkar was the player who most reminded him of himself. "I was very, very struck by his technique," Bradman said then. "I asked my wife to come and look at him. She said, 'Yes, there is a similarity'."

Among the tributes from Australian cricketers, Steve Waugh said in a book celebrating Bradman's 90th birthday: "He is the symbol of Australian cricket, the heartbeat, the inspiration, the image of all that is good in sport and life in general."

Campbell determined to tackle world stage

ATHLETICS

BY MIKE ROWBOTTOM
in Lausanne

DARREN CAMPBELL'S performance in the chill surroundings of Lausanne's Stade de la Pontaise on Tuesday night has convinced him to take up his place in Britain's World Cup team next month.

But Mark Richardson, fourth in a 400m won by Olympic champion Michael Johnson, came away from the same

meeting having drawn the opposite conclusion about his own course of action.

Campbell, who took himself to a new level in winning the European 100m title in 10.04sec last week, had been undecided about taking up the invitation to represent Britain in Johannesburg between September 11 and 13 against sides assembled from the United States, the Americas, Africa, Europe and the host nation.

But after a run of 10.18sec had kept him in touch with, if

not quite alongside, some of the world's leading sprinters, he has added the World Cup to his agenda.

"I wanted to see what I could do running races back to back first," he said. "I didn't want to be slipping back below 10.30, and I haven't. I think I'll be OK for the World Cup now." While his rivals were well rested, Campbell - who gained a second European gold in Saturday's sprint relay - had travelled to Switzerland the day before after getting less than three hours of sleep. "Ob-

viously you have to celebrate, haven't you?" he said with a grin.

Campbell's next imperative, however, is rest. After his race he was feeling an old injury in his right hamstring which had tightened up in the blustery conditions. He is due to return to competition in this Sunday's match at Glasgow between Britain and the United States.

Richardson, whose season got under way with such huge promise when he defeated Johnson in Oslo with a time of 44.57sec, is a far less buoyant fig-

ure than Campbell. The 25-year-old Windsor athlete, a weary fourth behind Johnson in Lausanne in 45.22sec, fulfilled his obligations in the European 400m relay final by holding off the challenge of Poland's record holder Robert Mackowiak on the last leg. But he is still clearly shaken by his failure to do better than bronze in the individual final, where his great domestic rival Iwan Thomas earned the title he had coveted.

"Beating Iwan in the Commonwealth Games would make

up for the Europeans," he said. Accordingly, he is almost certain to turn down the invitation to run in the relay team in Johannesburg, preferring to prepare single-mindedly for his season's target in Kuala Lumpur later in the month. "My priorities have changed now," he added.

Priorities in Lausanne began to change soon after the sun had slipped below the horizon and the wind had begun to come off Lake Geneva. By the time the men's 100m

took place, the aim of breaking Donovan Bailey's world record of 9.84sec - stated, as usual, by the hyperactive Ato Boldon - had been amended, in the athletes' minds if not those of the chilled spectators. Given the circumstances, the winning time of 9.92sec by the world champion, Maurice Greene, was hugely respectable.

By the same token, Colin Jackson's time of 13.09sec in the 110m hurdles was outstanding so soon after winning the European Championships, though



Jackson: Outstanding run

he was pipped to the line by his great rival, the American Allen Johnson, who recorded 0.02sec faster than the Welshman.

SUTTON
UCI
BR Sprint
11.15am
The Aven
10pm Ba
11am Dr
3.45pm
3.30pm
Merrmaid
12.15pm
The Mag
Camelet
1.15pm
TURNPIK
CORONE
1.30pm
Aveners
1.30pm, 3
2pm, 5.15

JP 11/10/150

Faltering spine of England's batting

CRICKET
BY DEEKE PRINGLE

A BAD BACK could deprive England of their most experienced player this morning, when they begin their first match against Sri Lanka at The Oval. Michael Atherton, who has played 84 Tests for his country, has long suffered from back problems and yesterday Steve James, the Glamorgan opener, was called up as cover.

Atherton back scores are nothing new, though this one is thought to have been brought on by all the travelling during the recent one-day series. According to the chairman of selectors, David Graveney, if the match had started yesterday, Atherton would not have been able to take the field despite having a brief rest and some gentle fielding practice.

It would be unusual for the opener to miss out. To date he has 63 consecutive Tests under his belt, which is only two short of equaling the England record held by Ian Botham and Alan Knott. Considering his back, it is a remarkable record and one that also highlights his importance to England as a batsman.

Despite Alec Stewart's matter of fact attitude to the injury - psychology has been a recent dimension to England's game - Atherton's absence would be a severe blow to England's plans of winning this match. "Atherton is a top player," conceded Stewart, "but if he isn't fit, he isn't fit. Steve James has already played a Test this year and he has carried on his good form for Glamorgan."

Coincidence or not, it was the second time in two days that England had sent for reinforcements beyond the Severn Bridge: confronted unexpectedly by a dry and bare pitch on Tuesday, they had already whistled up off-spinner Robert Croft.

A day is a long time in the preparation of a Test pitch, however, and if Croft's inclusion looked a certainty 24 hours earlier, the signals - after the groundstaffs "grooming-up" of the pitch overnight with a plastic groundsheet - have since become blurred.

"I don't think the top will go like it did last year," said Stewart, who later implied that Ben Hollis, who is now included, despite picking up a £1,000 fine for turning up to yesterday's practice 45 minutes late.

If the 20-year-old all-rounder does play, he will have been treated far more leniently than his former Surrey team-mate Chris Lewis was in 1996. After being fined, Lewis was subsequently dropped from the side.

To be fair, though, Lewis was actually late for the match itself, famously claiming that a puncture had delayed him - an excuse Ray Illingworth, then England supreme, clearly chose not to believe. Hollis's reason for being tardy was even more mundane: he apparently overslept after failing to receive his alarm call in the team's Chelsea hotel three miles away.

Despite the disarray in preparation and the caution with which one-off Tests tend to be treated, England's captain was confident that all was well, and that his side would continue in the positive vein that saw them overhaul a 0-1 deficit against South Africa.

"I've been stressing to the boys that this is not just a one-off match, but one we want to win," said Stewart. "Ideally, I'd like to win three Tests in a row and finish the season on a high."



Mark Ramprakash (right) at nets with Ben Hollis, who was fined £1,000 yesterday for being late for practice. David Ashdown

their three visits to England having brought two defeats and a draw. This time, they have the players to achieve more, though a long batting line-up is far stronger than a bowling attack carried by the wily off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan.

According to the Sri Lanka manager Muralitharan can spin it on the M4 and his 52 Test wickets this year - one more than Angus Fraser has taken - have come from just seven Tests. Although England would not admit it, the threat of Muralitharan,

a huge spinner of the ball, is clearly worrying them. Yesterday, after the players had long dispersed, the groundstaff were still frantically brushing up the grass on the pitch in a bid to get moisture in it.

If it does green up in time, England will be clear favourites, though the loss could provide whoever wins it with the teasing dilemma of whether or not to bowl first. So far this summer England have tried that twice with only 50 per cent success. And that was with Atherton fit.

Key and Peters prosper Mullally leads the rout

BY JOHN COLLIS
at Taunton

Pakistan Under-19s; 276
England Under-19s 332-3

AFTER SO much suicidal batsmanship on the first day of this second Youth Test it was a pleasure to watch proper cricket yesterday. England moved steadily to a first-ings advantage, thanks largely to a stand of 112 runs between Robert Key and Stephen Peters, though even they could not control the occasional urge to self-destruct before they calmed themselves, and prospered.

The third over of the day, however, brought a continuation of the wicket harvest that had seen Pakistan bowled out on a flat track in two sessions. The left-arm, Zahid Saeed,

bent the ball into the pads of Ian Planagan and Giles Haywood to reduce England to 40 for 2. A Dartford Bridge was then built between Kent's Key and Essex's Peters that by mid-afternoon had Pakistan bereft of ideas. Bazi Khan, the captain, dispensed with close fielders and assembled a defensive circle, waiting for something to happen.

The liveliest Pakistan bowler by far is the Wagar clone Irfan Fazil, who conjured up the ball of the day when a quick delivery leapt from just short of a length straight at Owais Shah's throat.

But Irfan remained wicketless - indeed, when he returned immediately after lunch Peters clipped, pulled and drove three fours in an over. After Zahid's early breakthrough it was the persevering

Kashif Raza who accounted for Shah and, 33 overs later, Peters. Key progressed to his third century of the season with a hook off Kashif into the new pavilion. Unlike those against Durham and Nottinghamshire, however, this international achievement is not deemed to be first-class. When he was sixth out, chipping a tired catch to mid-wicket, he had seen England into the lead.

The most intriguing bowling of the day came from Hasan Raza. He twirled variations on the leg-break with an off-break grip, and added richly to the day's entertainment. After tea he and the off-spinner Shoab Malik reduced runs to a trickle and brought Pakistan back into the game, before Michael Gough and 16-year-old Mark Wallace coughed out what could prove a useful lead.

BY JON CULLEY
at Worcester
Nottinghamshire v Leicestershire

ENGLAND'S DECISION to omit Alan Mullally from today's Test against Sri Lanka turned into title-chasing Leicestershire's immense gain as the left-arm cut a swathe through Nottinghamshire yesterday.

Making the most of damp conditions after morning rain delayed the start until 4pm, Mullally took four of the first five wickets to fall as Nottinghamshire slumped to the lowest total of the season, 61 all out, in 29.3 overs, the next five falling to Vince Wells. Mullally finished with a career-best 5 for 18.

But Leicestershire's joy at taking a significant step towards what is considered a vital victory in this

match was overshadowed by mystery surrounding the omission and absence from the Central Avenue ground of their captain, Chris Lewis.

The England all-rounder, no stranger to controversy during a turbulent career, passed a fitness test on Tuesday, following a three-match absence with a back injury, and was expected to play. But Leicestershire, who named two spinners in the expectation that the pitch would turn later in the match, chose Mullally and James Ormond over their frontline seamers, leaving out Lewis and David Mills.

Lewis has been standing in for the injured James Whitaker as the county's leader on the field but there was no explanation for his absence from the ground. Whitaker said: "The team was chosen on the basis of who

was available for the conditions and other factors that go into making a good team. I cannot say any more than that." Asked about Lewis's whereabouts, Whitaker said: "I've no idea."

The club chairman, Roger Goadby, said he was unaware of any incident that might have led to Lewis being excluded on other than cricket grounds. "If people are talking about an incident and disciplinary action all I can say is that I do not know of any incident," he said.

After Leicestershire had won the toss, Mullally struck with only the second ball of the match to clatter Guy Welton's stumps and soon sent back Usman Afzaal in similar fashion, before James Ormond removed Jason Gallian to a steeping catch off the top edge.

Wagh and Knight on the charge

MARK WAGH and Nick Knight plundered the Worcestershire attack for a century opening partnership on the first day of the latest round of County Championship matches yesterday. Wagh went on to score 119 and Knight 63 as Warwickshire charged away against their neighbours. Then it was Brian Lara's turn as he scored another century - his third in recent weeks after a barren spell - as the visitors passed the 400 mark. Hampshire's West Indian pace-man, Nixon McLean, was quick to put Sussex on the back foot with three early wickets at Hove to leave the home side on 50 for 4. He had Wasim Khan caught by Alex Morris for two, Toby Pierce caught by Bill Kendall for 14 and Chris Adams caught by Adrian Aymes for eight.

In between, Kevan James trapped James Carpenter low for two to leave Michael Bevan struggling to hold things together. He brought about a brief revival with a well-timed 58 but Sussex were eventually dismissed for 187. The Australian Stuart Law had to cart his normally fluent batting style as he struggled to put together a batting 47 on his return from injury to keep Essex afloat as Yorkshire's seam attack hit back between lunch and tea on day one of the County Championship match at Scarborough.

Britannic Assurance Championship Derbyshire v Durham

Derby: No Play Yesterday due to rain

Northamptonshire v Kent

Northampton (Day 1 of 4): Kent (0 psc), Northamptonshire (1 psc)

Kent won toss

Kent - First Innings

P Wells not out	19	0	1
C O Welch not out	14	0	2
Extras (b2 w2 nb10)	14		
Total (for 4, 23 overs)	83		
Falls: 1-0, 2-8, 3-28, 4-45,			
5-100, 6-117, 7-117, 8-117, 9-117, 10-117, 11-117, 12-117, 13-117, 14-117, 15-117, 16-117, 17-117, 18-117, 19-117, 20-117, 21-117, 22-117, 23-117, 24-117, 25-117, 26-117, 27-117, 28-117, 29-117, 30-117, 31-117, 32-117, 33-117, 34-117, 35-117, 36-117, 37-117, 38-117, 39-117, 40-117, 41-117, 42-117, 43-117, 44-117, 45-117, 46-117, 47-117, 48-117, 49-117, 50-117, 51-117, 52-117, 53-117, 54-117, 55-117, 56-117, 57-117, 58-117, 59-117, 60-117, 61-117, 62-117, 63-117, 64-117, 65-117, 66-117, 67-117, 68-117, 69-117, 70-117, 71-117, 72-117, 73-117, 74-117, 75-117, 76-117, 77-117, 78-117, 79-117, 80-117, 81-117, 82-117, 83-117, 84-117, 85-117, 86-117, 87-117, 88-117, 89-117, 90-117, 91-117, 92-117, 93-117, 94-117, 95-117, 96-117, 97-117, 98-117, 99-117, 100-117, 101-117, 102-117, 103-117, 104-117, 105-117, 106-117, 107-117, 108-117, 109-117, 110-117, 111-117, 112-117, 113-117, 114-117, 115-117, 116-117, 117-117, 118-117, 119-117, 120-117, 121-117, 122-117, 123-117, 124-117, 125-117, 126-117, 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Channon goes tilting at biggest windmills

IT IS about five years ago, early in the morning on the gallops above Lambourn, Mick Channon is giving orders to his work riders and trying to form second lot into groups of three for their gallops. "Dave, you go with Mick and Pete... no, ang on, Pete, you're with... no, old up, Jim, you go with..."

Standing next to me is the former jockey Lorna Vincent, who was, at the time, also Channon's assistant trainer. "You know, to look at him now," she says, "you'd think he hadn't got a clue what he's doing. But take it from me, there's always a plan in everything he does. He knows exactly what he's doing."

She was right. The seasons since have seen steady growth in both the size and earning capacity of Channon's string, to the point where his official roster runs to three figures.

Cheap horses who ran like expensive ones were his speciality, although there was a Group One winner all of four years ago, when Piccolo took the Nunthorpe Stakes at York.

Ex-international footballer turned trainer gains promotion into Classic league. By Greg Wood

Yet even that could not match the significance of his achievement at the same racecourse last week. You could saddle the winners of the two Group Two two-year-old races at the Ebor meeting and still be just another promising trainer travelling in the right direction. When both carry the colours of a Maktoum family member, however, you have almost certainly arrived.

Last season's prize-money total of £254,000 is a distant memory, sure to be doubled in the near future. More important, though, is the Gimcrack Stakes winner, and Binti Allayl, who won the Lowther Stakes, are now Britain's pre-eminent two-year-old colts and fillies respectively. Defending that status until the end of the season would bring glory as well as cash.

The schedule for both all most writes itself, with Josr

Algarhoud likely to contest the Group One Middle Park Stakes and the Dewhurst Stakes at Newmarket in the autumn, while Binti Allayl takes in the Moyglare Stud Stakes in Ireland and the Cheveley Park at Newmarket.

"That's always been the plan, right from the start," says Channon.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Nap: Dubai Nurse
(Musselburgh 5.00)
NB: Mancala
(Folkestone 2.15)

Channon says. "The only part of it that's gone wrong so far is that they both got beat the first time they ran, but these things happen."

A good showing from either and Newmarket or Guinness weekend in May next year is the next stop. What might happen in between, however, is anyone's guess, and few

would bet against the pair arriving for their Classic claid in Godolphin blue.

It is talk which exasperates his trainer. "No-one's said anything to me," he says. "I'm not worried, and I can't predict what the future will bring. If I could, I'd know tomorrow's winners. So I'm just going to carry on, and if it happens, so be it."

As he also points out a little later, though, "someone's got to make them". In other words, anyone who wants access to the Maktoums' vast reserve of thoroughbred raw materials needs to be a team player, something which Channon, of course, knows all about.

These days, there are horses by such illustrious stallions as Sadler's Wells, Mito and Green Desert bedding down in the yard, but so far at least, their trainer has not lost his passion for a poke around the flea market in

search of a Rembrandt. "Obviously I'm thrilled that we're getting better horses, but we also won the Molecomb Stakes at Goodwood with a filly by Whittingham, who's a £600 sire who stands just down the road from here. Golden Silca came from a two-grand nomination, and she didn't do us any harm finishing third in the Prix Morny. She was the best filly in the race by a long way, and you only get 3lb over there, not 5lb like you do here. There won't be many better fillies in France, that's for sure."

Which makes it all the more satisfying that he has a far better filly at home. Should Binti Allayl join Godolphin, though, it might yet be Golden Silca, the filly who cost £2,000 to breed, who is Channon's runner in the 1,000 Guineas next year. He would accept the situation without a murmur, and would enjoy nothing more than to win a big race with a bargain. But it is impossible not to hope that he will get a chance to prove that he knows exactly what he is doing with Classic horses too.



Channon 'knows exactly what he's doing' in the training game

Allsport

FOLKESTONE

2.15 Tudor Hall
2.45 Dream On Me
3.15 Loch Laird
3.45 FIELDS OF OMAGH (nap)

GOING: Good. **STALLS:** Straight course - stands side; Round course - outside. **DRAW ADVANTAGE:** High best at 7.1. **1** to **10** in 10. **11** to **12** in 10. **13** to **14** in 10. **15** to **16** in 10. **17** to **18** in 10. **19** to **20** in 10. **21** to **22** in 10. **23** to **24** in 10. **25** to **26** in 10. **27** to **28** in 10. **29** to **30** in 10. **31** to **32** in 10. **33** to **34** in 10. **35** to **36** in 10. **37** to **38** in 10. **39** to **40** in 10. **41** to **42** in 10. **43** to **44** in 10. **45** to **46** in 10. **47** to **48** in 10. **49** to **50** in 10. **51** to **52** in 10. **53** to **54** in 10. **55** to **56** in 10. **57** to **58** in 10. **59** to **60** in 10. **61** to **62** in 10. **63** to **64** in 10. **65** to **66** in 10. **67** to **68** in 10. **69** to **70** in 10. **71** to **72** in 10. **73** to **74** in 10. **75** to **76** in 10. **77** to **78** in 10. **79** to **80** in 10. **81** to **82** in 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Baum was born in Lakenheath, Suffolk, and after two years at the University of New Mexico moved to Oklahoma where he was back-up centre to Bryant Reeves, who joined Vancouver Grizzlies of the NBA.

SPORT

ANXIETY OVER ATHERTON P19 • BOARDMAN BLOWS UP P21

Arsenal
feel the
power
of Spice

FOOTBALL

BY NICK HARRIS

ARSENALS PLAN to play their first home European Champions' League game at Wembley could be thwarted by the Spice Girls, who have booked the Stadium for a concert on 16 September, the first day of this season's tournament.

After the draw for the League is made in Monaco later today, the fixtures will be drawn up and Arsenal may be drawn at home for their first match, despite having already lodged an official request with Uefa, European football's governing body, to play it away. If the Gunners - who had hoped to stage all their Champions' League home matches at Wembley - are dealt a home tie in their first game, they may have no choice but stage the match at Highbury.

"We cannot guarantee Arsenal an away game in their first fixture, because the wishes of their opponents would also have to be respected," a Uefa spokesman said yesterday.

"If they are drawn away, naturally, there is no problem. But if not, they will need to negotiate with the club they are drawn against. If the two clubs cannot agree, the match will be played in the country of the one whose name comes first out of the draw."

That eventually would mean Arsenal playing their opening game at Highbury, where the 38,500 capacity for domestic matches would be further reduced by Uefa's insistence on massive perimeter-board advertising and places for neutral observers.

Wembley, which would accommodate more than double the number of fans allowed at Highbury, would be infinitely preferable for the Double winners, but no matter how

much they really really want it, their Stadium debut may be delayed by the pop group.

Arsenal's bad news does not end there, as they are likely to come up against one of the top six clubs in Europe when the draw takes place. The top five seeded teams in the draw are the French champions, Lens, Italy's Juventus, Germany's Kaiserslautern, Spain's Barcelona and the Dutch title-holders, Ajax.

Arsenal would have been the sixth, based on the record of English clubs - largely Manchester United - in previous years, had Juventus retained the trophy in last season's final. The Italian champions, however, were beaten 1-0 by Real Madrid who, holders, have been given that seeding instead.

The Arsenal manager, Arsène Wenger, said: "It was a bad deal for us when Real Madrid won the final, because it means we will have to play against one of the seeded teams in our group."

The only silver lining that may emerge from today's draw, should it see Arsenal drawn at home, is the club will be able to count on the services of their non-flying Dutchman, Dennis Bergkamp, when it takes its Champions' League bow.

Wenger has reluctantly accepted that the striker will be unavailable for any trips that he cannot make independently by rail, road or sea. And even if that is logistically possible for some games, Wenger will not risk Bergkamp becoming so travel-fatigued that it dilutes his performance in key Premiership matches. Arsenal's next scheduled Premiership game after the opening Champions' League game is at home to Manchester United four days later, something they will be happy about as the Spice Girls at Wembley.



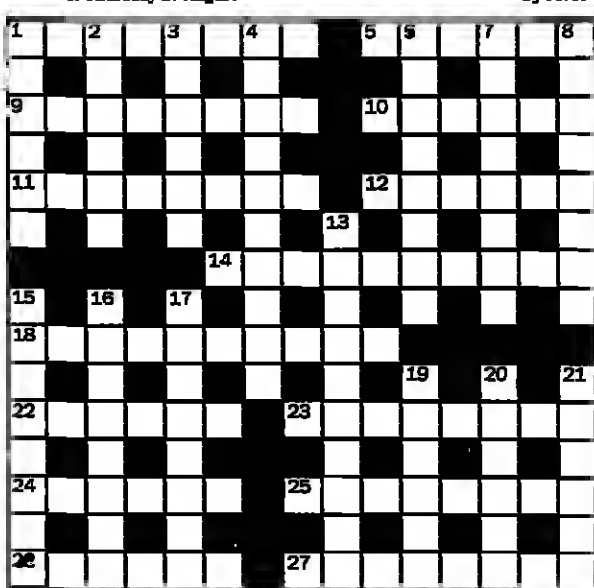
Ian Salisbury, the England leg-spinner, gets down to business in the nets at The Oval yesterday during final preparations for today's Test against Sri Lanka which could see the hosts without the inspirational Mike Atherton

THE THURSDAY CROSSWORD

No. 3700, Thursday 27 August

By Mass

Wednesday's solution



ACROSS

- 1 Extra rise could be double (8)
- 5 Spots pair seated in Jags? (6)
- 9 Maxim's attached to folded party hat (8)
- 10 Concealed Club's manifest later (6)
- 11 Flat patch dressing runway sore (8)
- 12 Dealer's comparatively rude in speech (6)
- 14 They often got involved with base elements (10)
- 18 Shopping facility CID traced, misused without right (6, 4)
- 22 Stout? Drink only half (8)
- 23 Patronise many (8)
- 24 Work in plant's coming

on in leaps and bounds (6)

- 25 Stuffiness Italian and I have escaped (8)
- 26 Whole republic's imbued with religious writing (6)
- 27 Stock's excluding trendy attire (8)

DOWN

- 1 English bachelor involved in tax allowance (6)
- 2 Sunday - truly cloudy and muggy (6)
- 3 In Spain (Toledo) curled up for light siesta (6)
- 4 A stirring piece (5-5)
- 6 Agassi's plans for grand slams (8)
- 7 Use drill (8)

POETRY: AFFRONT
ELEGY: SOUTHERN
HOPE: HAVOC
CENTRALLY: OMEGA
A: I: M
BUCKS: NARCISSE
A: I: M
COLONISTS: BRITA
H: G: E
ANGEL: BLACKJACK
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Gross holds crisis
talks with players

FOOTBALL

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR players were yesterday invited to a clear-the-air meeting with their coach, Christian Gross.

The Swiss coach, who has been warned by his chairman, Alan Sugar, that he needs to improve results or face the sack, held a series of frank discussions with every player in the dressing room about what is going wrong at the White Hart Lane club.

Gross is believed to have told the players that they must put more emphasis on team play and must cut out errors in defence. He apparently also spoke to the Frenchman, David Gi-

nola, about the need to put more effort into defending.

Tottenham are desperate to improve morale before their match with Everton at the weekend, for which they may make changes. The defender Ramon Vega, much criticised in recent games, is definitely ruled out with an ankle injury.

Marc Edworthy yesterday joined Coventry City from Crystal Palace. The defender said he is relishing the prospect of playing in the Premiership again, and admitted that life had turned sour at Selhurst Park under Terry Venables.

Coventry will pay an initial £250,000 - plus an extra £350,000 after 60 first-team appearances

- for Edworthy, who was captain and player of the year at Palace last season. But the defender found himself out of favour under the new regime at Selhurst Park, after he was asked to play in a midfield role.

"It was disappointing the way things turned out," Edworthy said. "Terry Venables was looking at different things and tried me in midfield, where I was bit out of my class, when I am a defender who can play as full-back, sweeper or centre-back. If you can't get into a First Division side, then you are going backwards." The 25-year-old had four seasons with Plymouth Argyle before joining Palace in 1995 for £350,000.

Super league 'split'

BY NICK HARRIS

EUROPE'S FOOTBALL leagues are still fundamentally divided over whether to join a breakaway super league or stay within the confines of Uefa, European football's governing body - despite announcing "unanimous" support for Uefa on Tuesday.

Following a meeting in Geneva to discuss proposals by the Italian-based company, Media Partners - a two-division, 32-team league and a knock-out cup competition - a Professional Leagues' spokesman said: "The essence of the meeting was that [the leagues] mandated Uefa to reform [its] competitions."

It is understood, however, that representatives from several countries, including Italy and Germany, made it clear that some of their clubs - including Milan, Juventus and Bayern Munich - would prefer to sign up with Media Partners. A Leagues' spokesman said there had been "moments of antagonism" at the meeting, a statement that appears to confirm dissent is still rife. Other clubs approached by Media Partners, including Manchester United and Arsenal, are also still actively involved in planning a super league and have informed their national federations of where they stand.

Uefa is planning an expansion of the Champions' League and a merging of the Uefa Cup and Cup-Winners' Cup - and is also exploring avenues that will strengthen its effective monopoly on European football. It is seeking to have its reforms exempted from European Union competition regulations.

The whole matter may ultimately be decided in the European Court. Dissident clubs will argue they have a right to take part in a breakaway super league while not being expelled from their domestic leagues. Uefa will argue they cannot. Should it come to that, Uefa may find itself losing out, according to legal sources.

More football, pages 22, 23

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Age 30		
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Virgin Direct	£9.15	
Direct Line	£10.40	
Standard Life	£10.71	
GA Life	£10.82	
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THURSDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION

Making a drama out of a crisis

A disaster for the country, the floods have been a godsend for the reputation of the People's Liberation Army. The tarnish of Tiananmen Square is being wiped away in a flood of heroic propaganda

Every Chinese flood needs its heroes, and none is more intriguing than Xu Hongping. Shirt unbuttoned, 27-year-old Ms Xu has been featured recently on prime time television and in newspaper photographs, squirting breast milk on to wasp stings on the back of the head of a People's Armed Police anti-flood fighter.

A more poignant heroine is Gui Dan, whose soldier fiancé was sent to battle the floods just before their wedding. She was shown racked by sobs after he was killed by a dike that collapsed in Hubei province. Ms Gui and her family later won national media recognition for donating 120,000 yuan (\$9,200) of their savings to buy clothes for flood victims. "As a soldier, my fiancé sacrificed his life for the people," she said.

In China this summer there are the floods, the worst since 1954, causing untold misery for millions of people, and widespread destruction. And then, as pervasive, there is the flood propaganda. The party mouthpiece, the *People's Daily*, said this week in a typical editorial: "Our cadres at all levels have devoted their loyalty, wisdom, and flesh and blood to the fight against the floods. This is a strength to shake the world. From them, the people see the strong leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and government; they see the Communist Party is good, the People's Liberation Army is good, socialism is good, and the great family of the motherland is good."

Despite two decades of reform and opening up, the floods have shown that China remains a deeply Communist regime at heart. The way the flood battle has been portrayed in the Chinese media is a reminder of its ingrained political culture. Old habits die hard. This has been a mass mobilisation of which Chairman Mao would have been proud, and it is Maoist rhetoric, charged with historical resonances, that provides the idiom. Take Ms Xu's breast milk, for the sake of argument. Reporting her case, the Chinese media drew a direct parallel with the famed women of Yimeng region in Shandong province, who provided breast milk for starving Red Army soldiers during the pre-1949 revolutionary struggle. Or consider the revival of the Maoist slogan "Yi bu pa ku, er bu pa si" ("Don't fear hardship, don't fear death"), now applied to the imperilled soldiers desperately shoring up the dikes.

The floods are also a reminder that most of Chinese society is still organised in a way which allows the government to marshal its population in times of crisis. Most people still belong to a *danzhi* (work unit), the old socialist organisation through which housing, medical insurance, pensions and mass campaigns are co-ordinated. In flooded regions, these work units have each been allocated sections of the

dike to protect, manning dangerous stretches around the clock. In Harbin, state shops are having flood sales to raise money, and *danzhi* as well as individuals have organised food deliveries to the soldiers.

This year's floods come at a time when China's economy is already faltering and rising unemployment is eroding popular faith in the socialist system. "What they are trying to do is to rebuild the social contract through the floods," said Yves Nalet, chief editor of the Taiwan-based *China News Analysis*, which monitors the mainland press. "This is consistent with [what has happened] every time you have floods; it was the same during [the severe floods of] 1991. The Chinese use natural disasters to try to pull people together, to promote benevolence."

On television and in the newspapers this has meant blanket coverage of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), racing to plug breaches with sandbags, rescuing flood victims, and standing up to their necks in swollen rivers to block the water with their bodies. Every senior party leader has been shown visiting the dikes, megaphone in hand, exhorting the front-line troops to further acts of heroism in the name of the party. To Western eyes it may seem corny, but the propaganda hits all the right buttons with most ordinary Chinese. In the Jianhua grocery store in Peking, Zhang Meizhen, 44, said: "The soldiers are like the pillar of the people. When I saw them standing in the water, I was almost moved to tears."

No one would dispute the efforts of the PLA during this year's floods, but large numbers of other people are strangely absent from the story. Missing for the most part are the dead and the victims. The Chinese media has shown few images of the 14 million flood refugees, or the vast shanty settlements along the tops of the dikes. There is almost no coverage of the gruesome, unhygienic conditions in which millions of homeless are now living; the emphasis instead is on efforts to help them. Nor has there been any proper discussion about the man-made en-

BY TERESA POOLE

vironmental causes of the disaster. And on the most sensitive issue of deaths, no official figure was released between 6 August and yesterday, when the toll was updated to 3,004.

China's propaganda chief, Ding Guangen, has ordered the media to "provide moral support" to flood workers. "More should be done to highlight the civilians, soldiers and officials fighting the floods, and the relief efforts nationwide," he said.

So this is to be the good news flood. To which end, the foreign media have generally been refused permission to visit flood areas.

Dai Qing, the pro-democracy mainland journalist who is the leading opponent of the Three Gorges Dam, dismisses the Chinese media coverage as "even worse than propaganda". "We cannot get the important information, such as how huge the flood is, why some dikes and some embankments fail, and how many people have died. What we see on TV is only how brave the soldiers are, how the people are so moved by the soldiers, and how hard officials are working. I am very, very interested and concerned about the truth about the floods, but I cannot get it."

China's economy with the truth is nothing new. The real death toll of the late Fifties Great Leap Forward famine, estimated at 30 million, has been written out of Chinese history. Closer to the present drama, the collapse of the Bangiao and Shimantan dams in Henan province in 1975 killed an estimated 85,000 people, but has never been publicly reported in China.

To this day, reluctance to publish bad news is more than equalled by patriotic exhortations. According to another *People's Daily* editorial, thanks to the unity of the Chinese - "harder than iron and stronger than steel" - China "has created one miracle after another on earth". The PLA has declared it will "fight to the death to defend the dikes".

All this is met by a surprising lack of cynicism

Continued on page 8

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Tycoon vs the euro

Sir: Paul Sykes, the millionaire Eurosceptic, expresses his concern that the single currency will adversely affect miners in Barnsley and steelworkers in Sheffield ("Tycoon plans anti-euro campaign", 26 August).

Since when did a Conservative ever worry about the effect of an economic policy on these groups of people? Please, Mr Sykes, spare us your concern for the people your party did more to hurt than any change in a medium of exchange could possibly do.
IAN SEDDON
Liverpool

Sir: It, as polls commissioned by Paul Sykes have found, 93 per cent of the British people want to know more about the euro, it is not because there has been a shortage of people telling them why monetary union is a bad idea. I doubt that this 93 per cent will be too excited by the idea of another batch of anti-euro videos landing on their doormat.

The British people are intelligent enough to know that there are two sides to the argument. Many (including myself) have yet to make their minds up. Paul Sykes feels that he "owes it to the British people" to fund an anti-euro campaign. How public spirited of him. If he truly wants to provide a service, he should help people to make their own minds up, rather than ramming his opinions down their throats. A well-funded but balanced public education programme would be of far greater value.
TESSA MURRAY
London W13

Sir: Anne McElvoy ("Are the Tories dying out", 24 August) includes "Britain out of the EU tomorrow" as one example of "impossibilism". Well, yes, if she really means tomorrow or even soon. However, our exit from the EU is not impossible, just as our entry into the EMU is not inevitable or necessary.

Greater public awareness through the media of the dire consequences of both the EU and EMU membership is required. What we get, not least from the BBC, sadly, is a stream of Europhile platitudes, unsupported assertions and downright untruths, all building on the theme of inevitability and necessity.

Your recent Millbank on-message letter from Bill Rammell MP (4 August) provided a neat illustration. "The Euro is now virtually a reality [did he mean virtual reality?] ... people are focusing on a choice ... A single currency with lower interest rates, lower inflation, more jobs and a means to tackle currency speculation ...". And the weather will always be fine on bank holidays, because the EU will fix it for us.
M J KNIGHT
Slough, Berkshire

Sir: Businessmen like Paul Sykes who seem anxious to find ways of spending their excess fortunes should consider funding medical research or the relief of worldwide poverty instead of wasting money, like the late Sir James Goldsmith did, on lost causes.
RYWEL JAMES
Coleford, Devon

Britain hits back?

Sir: Given Tony Blair's unequivocal support for the American retaliation against "terrorist" bases in Sudan and Afghanistan it is likely that a British embassy or overseas facility will be attacked causing loss of life. It is probable that the group responsible will be identified by intelligence reports as being based in an Islamic country.

How will HM Government respond, given our wholehearted approval of American actions? We have the capability to carry out retaliatory strikes as the Americans did and that would be a logical expression of the policy stance adopted by Blair. Otherwise

we would look ridiculous, praising actions which we were not prepared to carry out ourselves, revealing the UK as a "paper tiger".

The most likely outcome is that, even giving the most compelling evidence, the Government will deny that it can identify with enough certainty those responsible and that Robin Cook will fudge and fulminate along the lines of "If we only knew who these cowards were we would teach them a lesson they would never forget."

It will fool no one and further lower our standing in the world - if that is possible.
GRAHAM PERKINS
Bromyard, Herefordshire

Sir: So it is not VX gas that is alleged to have been in the pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum, but possible ingredients for VX gas.

Today I went to my local supermarket and in the baking section found some of the ingredients to make a bomb. I then went to the B&Q and, in the gardening section, found the rest. Anyone living near a superstore should be vigilant.
FELICITY ARBUTHNOT
London E9

New Thatcherites

Sir: In his reply to Ken Livingstone (Right of Reply 24 August), Tom Sawyer claims that New Labour's policies are "rooted in the lives of ordinary people".

Hardly. The majority of "ordinary people" are opposed to the effects of privatisation, yet the Government supports the Tories' privatisation and is continuing with its own. Most employees are fed up with the insecurity of employment, the intensification of work, long hours, and dictatorship of management; yet New Labour

lauds the "flexible labour market" and is maintaining the anti-union laws. Most people are dismayed by the destruction of the environment, yet Labour in office has consistently taken the side of business against ecology.

People may be pessimistic about the possibility of changing any of this, and to that extent accept government policy. But this pessimism has in a large part been created by the Labour leadership tying down before Thatcherism in the 1980s and adopting it in the 1990s.
JAMIE GOUGH
Newcastle upon Tyne

Open the files

Sir: Your leading article (25 August) on freedom of information and the Public Record Office (PRO) has got the wrong end of the stick. The PRO's function is to select records for future research, and to this end it and government departments sift through tens of miles of records

Sir: Some breast implants contain a silicon device which can be read by an external scanner. This can be used to access details of the implant itself and its date of implant from a central database.

Professor Warwick ("Professor has world's first silicon chip implant", 26 August) is therefore far behind women who have had these implants introduced into their bodies. I, personally, am about 14 months ahead of him.
SARAH MARR
Chesham, Buckinghamshire
http://www.seraph.org

Sir: Whilst Jasper Rees (Television review, 24 August) has my full support in his "nit-

each year to archive perhaps 5 per cent which are of historical importance.

Reducing the period of time before records come to the national archives from 30 to 10 years will mean the government archives service doing 20 years' work in 12 months. The result - chaos. Only a small fraction of government files would be made available anyway.

Far better to take the PRO out of the equation altogether, and allow the public to have access to records whilst they are still in departments, subject to some sensible criteria of confidentiality. This is what they do in Sweden. Then we can have a sensible, and separate, discussion about how old records should be before they are deposited in the PRO for research purposes, unclouded by the just requirements of the freedom of information lobby.
EDWARD HIGGS
Department of History
University of Exeter

IN BRIEF

"picking" about misplaced apostrophes and misspelt surnames, he really should ensure that his own writing is free of nits. Since *hot* is itself the Greek word for "the", his use in the further "the" in referring to "the hot polio" is redundant, tautological, pleonastic and, to the true pedant, down right rebarbative!
N HOPKINS
Horsham, West Sussex

Sir: So "Pandora has learnt" (21 August) "that al-Fayed recently asked Geoffrey Robertson QC to be chairman

Help for jobless

Sir: As former chief accountant of the Employment Department, Pam Meadows ("Why so many drop out of the New Deal", 14 August) should know better than most that there is a wide range of help available for unemployed people. Yet she suggests that the New Deals are the only help provided to those without work. Help is provided to all people on unemployment benefit from their very first day.

This government has made important innovations in labour market policy. Far from ignoring lone parents, the disabled and older people, as the previous administration did, we are providing specific help for people on benefits other than unemployment benefits.

It is wrong to characterise the New Deal for Lone Parents simply as a job placing service and wrong to say that it does not offer any training. It helps lone parents to find work and develop their work-related skills and knowledge

through Employment Service programmes, by meeting course fees for other training - including office-skills training - and by helping with the cost of childcare.

It is far too early to be pronouncing on the success or failure of the New Deals. They have made an encouraging start.
ANDREW SMITH
Minister for Employment
Department for Education and Employment

Schools injustice

Sir: Jack Field (letter, 24 August) refers to grammar schools as "exclusion zones for the poor". It is good to see someone drawing attention to this problem. New Labour and all those who are happy to buy and accept selective education for their offspring without caring about the consequences for the rest simply don't want to know about it.

In this area, Greater Manchester, there is an extensive "creaming off" - first by the independent schools (Manchester Grammar, William Hulme and others); then by the local grammar schools; then by the more favoured voluntary-aided schools. "The rest", of course are shown up in the exam league tables, criticised by Ofsted and generally written off as problem schools with falling rolls (and, therefore, funding) without any reference to the pernicious effect of creaming off.

Neither David Blunkett nor Labour councillors are prepared to confront this injustice and the associated issues - the charitable status of public schools; parental choice (for those who can afford it); schools for pupils with special aptitudes (another exclusion zone); the divisive nature of the voluntary aided sector; freedom versus the survival of the fittest.
C SAUNDERS
Sale, Cheshire

Terrorism law

Sir: It was Thatcher who aimed to reduce the role of government. But it is Blair who hands interest rate control to unelected bankers, who gives increased power to unelected immigration officials, and elevates the word of unelected senior policemen to the rule of law - those whose word counted so much for the Birmingham Six, Stephen Lawrence and others ("Blair backs 'draconian' terror net", 26 August).
JOHN NICHOLSON
Manchester

Sir: However despicable it may be to bomb American embassies, terrorism is not practised by lunatics with nothing better to do; it arises from political frustration and repression. The American and British propaganda that pretends otherwise is a significant part of the problem.

Those bombs were a very small thing when set against the death and destruction caused by American foreign policy since the Second World War. Israel and Saudi Arabia are only two among many unpleasant regimes supported by the US in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and South America. The consequent torture and loss of life suffered by local civilians does not bear thinking about.

It is vital, therefore, that this country should remain a place where victims of brutal regimes can find sanctuary and express their views freely. They live in interesting times and what they have to say is interesting, if unpalatable.
JON GRAY
Bath

Sir: It will be interesting to see whether the courts will consider the criminal proceedings under the legislation to be proposed next week meet the requirements of a fair trial under the Human Rights Act 1998.

JOHN GRIFFITH
Emeritus Professor of Public Law
in the University of London
Marlow, Buckinghamshire

Sir: What if, as you stood there - innocent - before the judge (and no jury), he awaited the word from a senior police officer who didn't like you ... or your family? Might not Mandela, Adams and others be able to speak from their own experience on this one? On such evidentiary terms, even Jesus was convicted.
THOMAS HUTCHESON
McFADDEN
Pembroke College
Oxford

Sir: If the Foreign Secretary was willing to condone the bombardment of Khartoum on the word of an American politician, it is hardly surprising that the Home Secretary is now willing to accept the conviction of a "terrorist" virtually on the say-so of an RUC officer.

CHARLES HUGHES
Felixstowe,
Suffolk

Beating the bonk

Sir: Ani Harris (letter, 18 August) need look no further for "the bonk", than *Wonder Wheels*, the 1956 autobiography of that great racing record holder Eileen Sheridan.

"Lack of food, and physical misery it can cause, are known to cyclists by a number of funny names - the sags, the bonk, a packet, the knock, and so on - but the funny names cannot disguise the fact that the condition to which they refer is one of helplessness, humiliating, incompetence. Legs seem to turn to strings, and the most cheerful temperament is overwhelmed in pessimism and despair."

My grown-up young family still gasp with disbelief when their father casually asks if any one has seen his "bonk bag" before he sets out on a long cycle ride.
JOHN SCOTT
Brentwood,
Essex

The chap - a species on the verge of extinction

IT'S NOT in one's nature to whinge. The whicket may be a bit iffy, the hunter you've been lent may be going short in front, the chap in the red corner may have secreted a knuckleduster into his boxing glove, but it's all part of the game. "Semper fidelis, mutare sperno".

We used to sing at school. Which means, put into plain English, "When in doubt, hack on".

But bloody hell. There comes a time when one has to stand firm like the thin blue whist at the battle of wherever, and say, "Now hold hard, old chum. This far, and no further."

Because, frankly, the chaps have had enough. Week by week, the great tide of the unwashed, the publicly educated, the female and the plain ordinary rises around one's ankles. All about, our insti-

tutions are tumbling. And now even the MCC is going native.

Save the pound, they say. Save the planet. Surely to goodness, it's time someone spoke up on behalf of one of Britain's greatest cultural assets. Save the chap.

Not that one wants to be in charge. Clearly the days have gone when the country was run by nice old boys in plus-fours who worked out their sums for the Budget with the help of a box of matches.

Some might say that we could do with the quiet dignity of a Sir Alec Douglas-Home rather than the grinning twit of 10 Downing Street, the robust stupidity of a Henry Brooke rather than the bespectacled swot now at the Home Office, but not me. Let them have their mobile phones

and electronic calculators, their "kids" and pints of "lager".

On the other hand, without a single chap in the Cabinet, a certain quiet authority seems to have vanished from our public life. Even when the plump sailor with the tortured vowels was in charge, there were a few cents to be found in government, usually in charge of something marginal, like agriculture or education.

Pym, Hogg, Whitelaw, Hurd, Carrington, Nott. Chaps who had been brought up to understand that in this life being too clever by half impresses the ordinary man a good deal less than a decent accent. When things turned tricky and the natives were getting restless in some God-forsaken part of the world - Aden, Rhodesia, the Falklands, the Balkans, Belfast -



TERENCE
BLACKER

All about, our institutions are tumbling. And now even the MCC is going native

It was a chap who would step out of the pavilion, with his air of natural authority and slightly dull

integrity, to play with a straight bat on behalf of his country.

Where are the chaps of yesterday? Those who have bigger houses have been obliged to open them to the public, allowing hordes of Darrens and Sharons with their nans and their Rot-tweillers to traipse across the croquet lawn in shell-suits and trainers or to watch, from behind a silken rope, as a real live chap has breakfast with his family. Others, in a doomed attempt to be normal, have grown beards or taken to running restaurants.

Bloodlines are getting thinner, you see. Once, the fact that most chaps weren't too bright when it came to earning a living was regarded as a sign of character. Now it counts against them. They've sold their pictures, their

libraries, their ornamental cannons. They've married Americans. Soon they're not even going to be allowed to collect a bit of pocket money by snoozing through a debate in the House of Lords.

Where once they might have shuffled down to the Garrick or to Lord's for a snifter and a tizz over a copy of *The Times*, they will now found they have been invaded, too. Unisex. Dear God.

It's not that chaps have got anything against women per se. Nothing could be more agreeable than the twitter of female company over a dinner table. But when the cigars and brandy come out, surely it's not too much to ask for the ladies to fall out, and go somewhere else to talk about their internal recipes and relationships.

However well behaved they are - and one gathers that many of the ladies who wish to join the MCC can be quite useful in the deep field - their presence will change Lord's for ever. A sort of per-fumed otherness will hang in the air, an ever-present reminder of the domestic, the trivial. What next? Bring-and-buy sales at the Beefeater? Tupperware parties at White's?

One longs to raise one's voice, to resist in some way, but one's enslaved to one's breeding. Making a fuss is simply not on. But surely the chap is as worthy of preservation as any old and precious building or medieval hedgerow? After all, he's part of one's heritage. D'you see?

Miles Kingston is on holiday

JP 11/10/50

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Labour's hospital numbers game doesn't add up

LABOUR HAS lost no time in greeting the first fall in NHS waiting lists since it came to power. Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, could not disguise his glee – and relief – at this “massive achievement” by NHS staff. Doctors and nurses do indeed deserve our praise as they work ever harder to meet the Government’s targets. And its figures do superficially appear convincing; numbers waiting for treatment have fallen.

Unfortunately, Mr Dobson’s case does not stand up to critical analysis. The real outlook is far less rosy than he would have us believe. Waiting lists are still longer than they were in May 1997, and there are more fundamental problems than simply that of numbers. Labour has made far fewer changes to the NHS than it likes to pretend. The main components of the Conservatives’ internal market, including the division between “providers” of services, such as hospitals, and their “customers”, such as GPs, have been retained. This means ministers have fewer means of controlling the direction of the service than the public have been led to believe.

In an increasing number of health authorities the Private Finance Initiative contracts out control of hospital care to private companies, which will demand rising profits over the medium to long term. NHS Trust status gives power over care in individual hospitals and GPs’ surgeries to management, and takes it away from local health authorities that governments used to be able to pressurise in order to achieve results. We should be suspicious of ministers who trumpet results over which they have less and less power. Even Labour’s “extra” funding amounts only to providing enough money to plug the gaps and return to the levels of funding increases associated with the early Major years.

But we should be wary of these waiting-list figures. The misuse of government statistics is nothing new, as Labour never failed to remind us when unemployment figures were meddled with by the Tories in the Eighties. Hospital managers, rather than government agencies, are the original source for the figures that ministers are citing. They have an incentive to make themselves appear more “competitive” inside the internal market; their reports should be treated with caution. Many patients have to wait months to see a consultant, which delays their appearance on waiting lists at all.

Even worse, the setting of regional, national and local targets themselves is another example of the adoption of management consultancy methods, which are quite



inappropriate in the public services. Fetters for single indicators, as economists have known for years, distort the very problem they are intended to solve. In their efforts to prevent any patients waiting more than 18 months for care, ministers have ensured that the numbers of patients waiting 12-18 months are still rising.

The culture of “throughput” – treating patients ever more quickly – is the main means being used to shorten waiting lists. This bolsters the managerial culture in which patients are seen as problems rather than people. Bigger hospitals are being built, to meet unrealistic targets for the bed numbers per year; patient care will be further neglected. More local hospitals will close.

Waiting lists are not the be-all and end-all for health care; one compelling reason for the existence of the NHS is that it ensures there are waiting lists, to ration care and prevent health costs from burdening the rest of the economy, as they do in the US. Ignoring the quality of the NHS, in order to increase the quantity of care provided, is one way to undermine public confidence.

Mr Dobson’s case is that the “supermarket” of NHS decline has been turned around. Opinion poll results undermine his argument; public confidence in Labour’s ability to change the NHS is still falling. The public are more realistic than their government; this ship is still steaming into dangerous shallows.

Crisis-torn Russia may reject the West

WHERE RUSSIA’S apocalyptic financial crisis will end, no one can say. At this chaotic moment, the country is beyond Western help. For the International Monetary Fund to provide more resources – that is, assuming it has the resources – would be grossly irresponsible, a case simply of throwing good money after bad. The main task for the financial authorities now is to prevent the Russian contagion spreading to other emerging markets and triggering what at worst could be global financial collapse. Even if western economies can cope with the crisis, it would be a tragedy if Moscow’s problems, and the growing concerns over Argentina and Brazil, killed off the whole development of private finance in the Third World.

It is for Russia to deal with its own mess, however, and this process cannot even begin until a functioning government is installed. One thing is already clear, and let the West ignore it at its peril. This crisis will have far-reaching political effects. The West has grown used to thinking of Russia as a friendly, if prickly country, devoted to the same goals of democracy and free markets as ourselves. That assumption no longer holds. It would be wrong to expect that once the turmoil settles, a new crop of Harvard-trained reformers will re-emerge. In the eyes of many Russians, Western reform has been a disaster. The words yesterday of Gennady Zyuganov, the Communist party leader, castigating “governments dictated by the West, guiding policies deadly for Russia”, may be demagoguery. But they will have wide resonance.

Russia’s economic distress is likely to endure for many years. The government that has to cope with it should be as strong and representative as possible – so it must have the support of the Communists. This in turn implies a more authoritarian government, probably less friendly to the West. This truth may be harsh, but we would be foolish to ignore it.

On the spot

TELEVISION stars are now moving stations as fast, and for as high fees, as footballers. So why not the football commentators as well? Jimmy Hill’s move from the BBC to Sky may not warrant much in terms of the transfer, but his salary should be much enhanced. But if we are following the Premier Division why not bring in foreigners? Hill may be fine as far as knowledge is concerned, but when it comes to style and flair one can think of several Continental presenters who would do far preferable.

When it comes to saving lives, one Mo Mowlam is worth 100 missiles

I WISH I had a quid for every time some idiot has repeated the silly saying that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter”. The apparent meaning of this is that everything is relative; in a post-modern age why is any one viewpoint superior to any other? They are all constructs. So Nelson Mandela is a dangerous villain one moment, and a hero the next; Yitzhak Shamir was a bomber and became Prime Minister of Israel; good ol’ cuddly Yasser blew up all those parked planes in Jordan in the Seventies and, 20 years later, is the respectable father of his people; David Ervine shakes hands with Gerry Adams; and one day, maybe (so this thinking goes), we’ll be cutting trade deals with Osama bin Laden.

Much of this thinking disgusts me. There are precious few causes today that are worth the life of a single child, let alone those of 300 Kenyans, 300 Ustarets or 300 Palestinians. For Mandela, the use of bombs was an extremely rare act in a struggle in which millions were denied any recourse to democratic means. And, even then, they didn’t bloody well work. In the case of the Omagh bombers, however, living in a democratic and tolerant country and surrounded by a peace process validated by 90 per cent of the people of the island, a much darker pathology is at work. Where Mandela was desperate to get shot of violence at the earliest possible moment, the flint-hearted car-bombers of the “Real IRA” wanted to keep on killing as late as they conceivably could. There is no meaningful equivalence. But it is not necessarily true, this argument that we always end up doing some kind of business with ter-

rorism, it is the case that politics almost invariably provides the means to defeat, end or disarm it. Sinn Féin’s leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, steeped in Republican martyrology nevertheless eventually got sick of all the bollocks about volunteers and operations and apologies to civilians. They’d had enough. There hadn’t been an exhausted surrender by successive British governments, which rightly held tenaciously to the principle of allowing the majority in Northern Ireland to decide the future of their province.

But just as there was no military surrender, there was no military victory. Chronic fatigue alone would not have been anything like enough to allow Adams and McGuinness to bring the majority of their supporters, armed as well as unarmed, to the table. Politics did that: the much maligned, underestimated art of politics.

Consider how the Middle East peace process went pear-shaped, and led us inexorably to a loony called bin Laden becoming a hero to the more impressionable part of the Muslim world. Yitzhak Rabin, a reluctant (but complete) convert to allowing a Palestinian entity, was murdered by an orthodox right-wing fanatic. His successor, Shimon Peres, was then destabilised by a series of appalling bombs planted by Palestinian opponents of the peace process. The two sets of zealots wanted the same objective; the Israeli people (by the slimmest of majorities) rewarded them by electing Benjamin Netanyahu on a “peace with security” platform. It was the greatest tragedy of the last half-decade.

The Israeli election result stymied America’s ability to broker further



DAVID AARONOVITCH
The moment you stand over graves of kids killed by terrorists is the worst time to decide how to react

progress, and lost it vital support in the Arab world. This has made it far more difficult to reform the alliance that defeated Saddam Hussein, and has led to the recrudescence of militant terrorism – except that this time it is clothed in the robes of the religious, rather than the fatigues of cod Marxism. The seeds of the Kenya bombing were sown in a Tel Aviv square four years ago.

Peace With Security is, of course, usually a chimera. It substitutes the magic notion of a military fix for the agonising process of politics. Revenge becomes an objective, whereas the only true goal is the neutralisation of the terrorist. And this neutralisation is almost always achieved by slicing, bit by painful bit, the political ground away from the terrorists, undermining their alliances, disappointing their hopes of growth. Efficacy is everything.

I’m not saying that you cannot physically fight terrorists. With one-man bands such as Sendero Luminoso and the Abu Nidal bunch, it may make sense to pop the top guy if you can do it – though you rarely can. You are also entitled to use every trick in the book to keep them under surveillance, and to foment murderous divisions in their ranks. They want, after all, to kill our children. We owe them no consideration. But, given the clear-headedness with which the tactics of democracies must be planned, it is likely to be true that immediate or hasty reactions to the outrages of terrorists should be avoided. The moment that you stand over the graves of kids killed by these bastards, and take your measure of the lives ruined by their actions, that is usually the worst moment to decide how to react. After all, who brought you here? And what did they have in mind?

Take Omagh. At the moment the “Real IRA” are completely isolated. They are probably more scared of their own community than they are of the security forces. And they should be; there must be a good chance that they will be handed over by their disgruntled fellow republicans. Their one hope is to provoke a reaction from the two governments that will refute the republican myth, and bring back some measure of support. Paradoxically, one of the most sincere of their enemies, the local DUP MP Willie Thompson, could be, were his advice on the reintroduction of internment taken, their biggest chance of salvation.

So it isn’t silly to ask whether the Government’s proposals, which will be placed before the special session of parliament next week, are really ab-

solutely necessary. If they are convinced that such action will prevent another Omagh, then that alone could be sufficient justification. If not, they may reflect that now is precisely the time not to take the risk of reconstructing a hinterland for these terrible people to fall back on.

The same could be true for the battle against bin Laden. The issue is not whether we would like to erase him from the face of the earth (we would), but whether any course of action strengthens or weakens him in the long term. Some tough words about Israel’s sabotage of the peace process might have been rather more help in separating him from elements of his potential support than flattening a factory in downtown Khartoum.

And I wonder about the possible expulsion of the Muslim extremists who currently enjoy exile in London. Though it sticks in the craw to have these chaps justifying the murder of children from the comfort of our studios, is it not better to have them located in our capital? Where can you maintain better round-the-clock surveillance – in Kensington, or in some rocky wilderness north of Kandahar? If we know where they are, we can nab them when we need to.

All too often in our cosy democracies we think of military people as the good guys, and of politicians as the villains. Military action is noble, political compromise is shifty and dishonest. One is simple and the other is complex. But, for my money, one Mo Mowlam is worth a hundred Cruise missiles. When it comes to saving babies and marginalising terrorism, she’s far more accurate.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“I can assure you Kevin is alive and well, and very loved.”
Trevor Smith,
owner and agent of the hamster used in a controversial jeans advertisement

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“Man is only a reed, the weakest thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed.”
Blaise Pascal,
French moralist

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Indian Tiger by Philip Meech Ref 00108

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MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
Reaction to the bombing of Planet Hollywood in Capetown



WE MUST exorcise this evil now. There have been claims and denials as to who was responsible for last night’s bomb. Who but deeply evil people could presume to have the right to kill and maim others – innocent fellow citizens, perhaps even members of the very community they themselves come from – in pursuit of their ideological views? If those responsible for this atrocity believe that they have made a telling point against American attacks in Afghanistan and Sudan last

week, then the evil loose in the city is linked to an almost incomprehensible stupidity. They have reinforced the conviction that they are a scourge which must be eradicated.

If this evil is allowed to flourish, the prospect of religiously-motivated urban terrorism on the horrifying scale of Northern Ireland will become a real possibility and it will bring misery to every citizen of Cape Town. We can avoid that frightening prospect if all good people join hands to eradicate the evil be-

fore it spurs more bloodshed and begins to feed upon itself. Cape Argus, South Africa

WHILE CAPE TOWN is famous for its scenic Table Mountain,

beautiful sea views and tourist-oriented shopping plazas, officials will be investigating whether the bombing is related to the city’s lesser known side – an increasingly violent battle

between drug lords and Muslim vigilantes in the impoverished Cape Flats slums on the other side of the mountain. This is a conflict which has escalated over the past two years. Chicago Tribune

WE MUST make it clear that an act of terror is not an acceptable response to any grievance, legitimate or otherwise. Acts such as this will only serve to create greater divides between the people of Cape Town than apartheid ever did. Something

PANDORA

BALLOT PAPERS sent out for Labour's National Executive Committee election are numbered to correspond with membership details. New Labour's press office refused to discuss with Pandora how a secret ballot is maintained. "We have confidence in the process. Nobody has any problem with it," said Steve Bates, the Party's broadcasting officer. He referred us to Unity Security, the body overseeing the NEC election, but they, too, refused comment and suggested we ring Bates again. "Nothing untoward is happening," he sputtered when we rang back. "I am at the end of my tether here." He assured us that the mechanics of maintaining ballot secrecy would be revealed - after the election. So Party voters will just have to take it on faith that their votes are not going to end up in yet another Milbank database.

ONE PERSON who definitely will not be attending Michael Jackson's 40th birthday party at the Equinox in Leicester Square this weekend is, of course, Michael Jackson. "We're under no illusion about that," said Robin Meltzer, one of the party's organisers. This is the eighth year in a row that Jacko's glittering party has been held without any sign of the wacko. "This is all about showing solidarity with a man who is continually bashed in the press. If we didn't organise it, the fans would go to Hyde Park and organise themselves," said Meltzer. "We give them a safe environment for them to celebrate." Doesn't sound like much of a party, does it?

THE DEVOTED customers of the Ivy and Caprice restaurants might have gone into mourning if they'd read some of yesterday's papers, with the news of the sale of Caprice Holdings by owners Jeremy King and



Christopher Corbyn to Luke Johnson's Belgo chain. In fact, rather than taking £13.2m and heading for the hills, King and Corbyn are staying firmly in control of the day-to-day operations at both restaurants, as well as gearing up for their October relaunch of J Sheekey King and Corbyn have always refused to discuss their business and customers with the press, but they were telling regulars yesterday. "We're doing business as usual. We are determined to show, with this deal, that it's possible to capitalise without compromise."

JUST WHEN you thought the quality of British television could not sink any lower, Sky and Anglia Television have put their heads together and come down with *Giddy!* This new daytime talk show, starting in October, promises to bring "confessional TV back to basics". (Pandora hadn't noticed it climbing the high slopes of intellectual complexity recently.) Hosted by *Sunday Mirror* columnist Carole Malone, who plays the "judge", the set will be a modern courtroom where "your man-hungry best friend, your sloth-like spouse or your sister's natty behaviour" will be tried before a "jury audience". This could make Richard and Judy look like a visit with Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.

AFTER ALL the controversy about retouching photographs, Pandora was amused to see the picture of Mick Hucknall in Wednesday's *Daily Mail* that appeared under the headline "Simply White!" Walking on a beach surrounded by bronzed bodies, the Simply Red singer looks as if he's just had several layers of skin removed in an acid bath. Or was that photo simply rejigged a tone or two? A glance at the same photo in *The Sun* suggests this might be the case.

DUSTIN HOFFMAN was surrounded by an adoring group of female fans at Tuesday evening's opening party for *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*. His presence definitely raised the adrenalin level at the bash, particularly among London's hacks and PR flacks who were relieved to see that we could still attract the Hollywood A-list to our premieres. The film has a very laddish football feel, and so did the party, thanks to Vinnie Jones, one of its stars, and a pack of his Premiership pals. Pandora was curious about Dustin's football credentials and asked the star of *Tomb Raider* and *Rain Man* if he followed the British game. "Yes," he claimed. What was his favourite club? "Same as Sting's."

The beasts of the blackboard jungle



BIDISHA

Problems such as bullying are brushed aside. Advice to pupils is always, ultimately, 'get a grip'

SCHOOL TERM will shortly be beginning, so now is probably an opportune moment to discuss just how much teachers hate kids. For every hopeful fresh out of training college with a copy of *To Sir with Love* in their back pocket and a sunny smile on their face, there's a demented fiend who regards the classroom as a battleground packed with under-age verbal terrorists, and lunch-time detentions as heavy artillery.

Schools have always sold themselves on their ability to absorb every kind of student easily - different races, different abilities, different interests; all are catered for and treated as individuals. They're the place people of all levels can go to learn about life and receive all the encouragement, training and guidance they need. Schools claim positively to welcome students who are music or sports-oriented, rather than just academic, and promise to groom "exceptionally" bright pupils for later career brilliance.

Some institutions do indeed strike such a balance and every year release happy, well-adjusted individuals into society clutching hock-

ey trophies and a range of high-grade exam results.

But the vast majority of schools - especially those with a reputation for great university entrance success or league table supremacy to uphold - are run like high-security prisons, with staff constantly on the look-out for even the most petty violations of the rule book. They think it teaches pupils respect for authority or instils discipline, but the

only thing it upholds is a great tradition of sadism.

All that ultimately matters to headteachers are the pass/fail figures, the school's standing in the eyes of the board of governors, and raising enough revenue to construct some lovely new biology labs to overlook the lacrosse courts. Perhaps schools should funnel a little more cash into reviewing how pupils are actually treated during their school years?

There is no attempt on the part of senior teachers to incorporate a system of student respect into school life; to understand things from a pupil's point of view, and perhaps use something like counselling to get beneath the behaviour of certain "troublemakers". All too often, staff will hand out detention slips and threats to parents as a way of keeping the peace and quashing any dissent. Even non-behavioural problems such as bullying, anorexia and simple stress at a heavy workload are brushed aside or ignored as pleas for attention from students who can't back the pace. Advice to pupils is always, ultimately, to "get a grip".

There are always some who simply fall too far out of favour or tolerance. A report by Southampton University researchers shows that nearly 70 per cent of students expelled from school go on to lead lives of crime, with a conviction before the age of 25. Obviously, we're not in the midst of an epidemic of expulsions, creating a generation of disaffected young folk, but suspension and permanent exclusion are continually used by teachers to keep students in line.

Even the most liberal school must be organised hierarchically in order to function, I suppose, but such an organisation is almost automatically right-wing in its ethos. My (private) secondary school was proudly, righteously conservative, and although it boasted a wealth of young, liberal teachers, the people in the crucial posts were desperately small-minded. The prevailing attitude in such schools is that dissidents and insurgents must be weeded out, offenders are given no second chance, and any student who's called in for a warning lecture has to endure a tongue-lashing that inevitably ends with the words,

"You're no more special than anybody else in this school."

The report also makes extremely scathing comments about the treatment of expelled youths in "exclusion units", educational institutions attended by those who've been dropped from school. Apparently these places are simply holding-banks, with no option of remedial action to dispel any bad attitudes towards authority. Back at the school, at the moment of expulsion there's a sense of positive enjoyment in ruining a student's future at just 16 or younger, and no thought for the consequences. Suspension and expulsion threats are even backed up with hints that a student's future may not be too rosy what with the bad references and all.

Schools, especially conservative-minded ones, are terrified of their kids staging a sort of peasant uprising and have no sense of humour about even the faintest ripple of illegitimate excitement among the students. God forbid that a little bit of teen rebellion or backchat may be exactly that: the irritating but really harmless and natural demonstration of basic adolescent bravado.

We cannot afford to educate only a small élite



DAVID BLUNKETT

We are concerned that nearly 50,000 young people leave compulsory schooling unqualified

SITTING PUBLIC examinations is a stressful time for any young person. As a parent myself I know only too well the emotional highs and lows young people go through as they receive their results.

Our future depends on having well educated young people who can grasp the challenges of a rapidly changing world where more and more employees are expected to be highly skilled, creative and flexible. I passionately believe that everyone has the right to the good all-round education they need to achieve this.

Raising attainment at GCSE and for children at the end of primary school is part of our programme to raise standards across the board. We are setting a range of tough targets to do this. We cannot afford to educate only a small élite while the rest achieve mediocrity or worse.

By concentrating on the basics early on and pushing schools to raise standards, we are opening up new opportunities to far more people. This can mean getting a better job or being able to widen youngsters' horizons. It is wrong to see these two aspects of education as being mutually exclusive. Good schools combine teaching practical skills with a broad education.

Without a good grasp of the basics youngsters are unable to develop their own education and are left isolated from the rest of society. Today's results continue that trend. But we are concerned about evidence over recent years that nearly 50,000 young people a year leave compulsory schooling with no qualifications at all. We raised the school leaving age this year so that youngsters stayed on to do their exams; this may have affected the small rise in the failure rate. But we intend to go further, with a more work-related curriculum for those who can benefit from it, new targets to re-

duce the number without qualifications, extra information in performance tables, and more money to tackle social exclusion.

I know from my own experience how badly children can be affected if they lose out. Many youngsters in my constituency face disadvantage that is passed from one generation to another. For example those children in families where parents are long-term unemployed can find it hard to feel motivated because of their feelings of alienation. Some can lose out on the chance of work and too often turn to crime.

I welcome growing success at GCSE. Young people are working harder and achieving more than ever before. In all this we must continue to ensure that we maintain the high standards the GCSE exam has set during the 10 years since it was introduced, and ensure the same rigour for the complementary vocational qualifications now on offer. An exhaustive study in 1996 by the Government's qualifications watchdog and Ofsted found no evidence that standards had fallen over time. I an-

nounced last week that a group of independent experts will continue to monitor standards to maintain public confidence.

To transform the education system we have focused on improving basic literacy and numeracy. Measures such as the introduction of a daily literacy and numeracy hour are helping to give children the skills to access other subjects.

But subjects like music and PE remain compulsory in primary schools. In music, for example, we will invest in the subject to help more children to benefit, by setting aside a dedicated pot of money to promote the subject.

Reducing class size remains one of our central commitments, and it will help us to improve standards in the basics. Our pledge that no five- or seven-year-old will be in a class of more than 30 will be met ahead of schedule in September 2001. We have made additional resources available to enable those LEAs that want to do so to fulfil that aim by September 2000. The number of five-to-seven-year-olds in classes over 30 will fall for the first time in a decade and 1,500 new primary teachers will be joining schools from the start of the new term.

This autumn we will be announcing our targets for attainment at GCSE. Raising standards is more important than ever before given the ever-increasing economic competition. We need to help provide industry with the skilled, flexible and well educated workforce it needs to compete internationally.

By introducing a culture of target-setting across the education system we are providing a powerful lever with which to raise standards. Setting clear literacy and numeracy targets in primary schools offers practical help to teachers to help raise standards in the classroom. I



Pupils at Didcot School taking their exams

Tom Pilon

expect 80 per cent of 11-year-olds to reach the standard level for their age in literacy by 2002, and for 75 per cent of that age group to reach that standard in maths by 2002.

Attainment can be improved, given a realistic target to work to and the necessary resources. We announced in last month's comprehensive spending review that annual spending on education will be almost £10bn more by 2001-02, an average increase of 5.1 per cent in real terms in each of the next three years.

We want improvements to be based on offering teachers "something for something", to support them as they drive up standards.

Target setting will clearly define what needs to be achieved at GCSE level and in other parts of the education system. We are giving schools the resources to achieve these higher standards. Our package of reform will provide the education which young people need and our country requires in the global economy of the new millennium.

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Our dangerous reliance on America

THE THEME of Anglo-American relations in the 20th century has been the - perhaps unprecedented - peaceful transfer of hegemony from one power to another.

Great Britain, the supreme international power, protected the US during the 19th century. During the First World War, Britain as the dominant power encouraged the US to assume the role of a Great Power in the old international system, although she hoped it would be a role subordinate to her own; during the interwar period the two countries competed and co-operated in varying measure; and during and after the Second World War the US finally acted as the dominant power, protecting in her turn the weaker power. Britain encouraged the US to assume these international responsibilities; she believed that the US shared her view of the world and would generally support British interests.

The US and Britain have always been commercial and economic rivals; it has been the lack of territorial conflicts which have allowed these rivalries to be put aside when a

common danger threatens. It was common enemies, not historical links, which brought them together in the First and Second World Wars - first Germany and then Japan - and a common enemy in the Soviet Union which kept them together in the postwar world. The two countries currently lack an equivalent substitute and the geopolitical relationship has somewhat cooled.

Yet these historical links are as undeniable as the cultural connections are innumerable. There is the shared history itself; the US was the child of Great Britain, which bequeathed it language, literature, common law, and a political model against which the US designed its own system.

The common root of both legal systems means that the legal professions look to each other. Financial, literary and publishing worlds straddle the Atlantic, bridged also by academic relationships. There is the openness to each other's popular culture. Americans are more likely to visit Britain when they go abroad than any other country. British tourists return the compliment.

All of this provides a reso-



PODIUM

KATHLEEN BURK
From her inaugural lecture as Professor of Modern History at University College, London

nance, a network of contacts. And it is this texture of personal and professional relationships which has repeatedly carried the political and diplomatic relationship over rough ground. Triumphant America is hard for British policy-makers to swallow, but they have had to put up with it, at least publicly. This is because a country with continuing aspirations, first to world power, and then to world influence and the ability to

protect worldwide economic interests, but without the economic and military power to do so on its own, must find help. Britain over the 20th century has repeatedly striven to yoke American power to British policy - and the US has repeatedly struggled against her power being so co-opted.

For Britain there has seemingly been no choice. In January 1949, Whitehall agreed on the following principle: "Since post-war planning began, our policy has been to secure close political, military and economic co-operation with the USA. This has been necessary to get economic aid. It will also be decisive for our security. We hope to secure a special relationship with the USA and Canada. For in the last resort we cannot rely upon the European countries."

If the fundamental responsibility of a government is to protect the realm, it must do what is necessary, including adopting what can sometimes appear an ignominious posture, supporting the US even when the US does the seemingly unsupportable. The foundation of this approach is to ensure that Britain remains the US's most dependable ally, in the

hope and expectation that the US will remain Britain's. The flaw is that it does not always work - consider Suez, but it works often enough - consider the Falklands War - to ensure that it has remained the Ark of the Covenant.

What must now be asked, however, is whether the world has changed enough to allow British policy to evolve in another direction. No one with any knowledge of history can believe that the contemporary configuration of powers is set in stone, or that there can be any eternal friends or eternal enemies.

British and American interests are frequently complementary but they are not identical. Yet there is no obvious alternative power on which Britain can depend, while the European nation states remain unable to function as a single diplomatic or military actor. It would just be a bit reassuring to know that alternatives were being seriously thought about rather than the knee-jerk reaction in support of the Bellot Doctrine: "And always keep a hold of Nurse / For fear of finding something worse."

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Death of the African dream



DAVID ANDERSON
Optimism about Africa has withered in the face of calamities across the continent

A YEAR is a long time in Africa. Twelve months ago Laurent Kabila sat snugly in power in Kinshasa, applauded by President Clinton as a symbol of Africa's brighter future and strongly supported by the neighbouring governments who had helped him oust the tyrant Mobutu Sese Seko. Since the mid-Eighties, the US has led the West in pressing for political change in Africa. IMF/World Bank controls on monetary flows and threats to turn off the aid tap have helped to nurture the tree of democracy. Though the process had stumbled along, the fall of Mobutu and the promise of stability for Africa's most troubled country did indeed seem like a turning point.

On a much publicised visit to southern Africa following Kabila's victory, Clinton was upbeat and optimistic. Democracy was replacing tyranny, autocracy giving way to accountability. Post-apartheid South Africa and Nelson Mandela held the torch for regional prosperity and security. An African renaissance was under way, and America was keen to usher it in.

Over the last three weeks that hopeful vision of the new Africa has been shattered. Bombs on Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and now Cape Town have shown that Africa is on the front line of international terrorism, and that the tide of Islamic radicalism has risen here too.

At the same time, the reality of Africa's fragile regional politics has been exposed. In eastern Africa, reactions to the retaliatory attack upon Khartoum by the US revealed Sudan's isolation, but on Sudan's eastern borders conflict smoulders between Eritrea and Ethiopia, two governments which, Clinton's policy advisers had hoped, would help to stabilise the region.

Tales aimed at brokering a peace settlement in the civil war in southern Sudan have stalled. In Central Africa, rebel forces in the Congo threaten not only to topple Kabila's regime but to suck in the armies of several neighbouring countries into a regional conflict of unprecedented dimensions. In the face of such multiple calamities, optimism about Africa has withered.

While American and international attention has been focused on the East African bombings and their aftermath, it is the crisis in Congo that appears to have the most serious implications for African security. In the past fortnight a rebel army comprising regular Rwandan forces and the remnants of Mobutu's army has taken control of the eastern portion of the country, seizing the important town of Kisangani on the bend of the great Congo river.

Although the Museveni government at first denied any involvement with the rebels, early reports claimed that Ugandan forces were also engaged in fighting around Kisangani, and the Ugandans have since made it clear that they are supporting the rebel cause with military assistance.

As the rebels swept toward Kinshasa from the east, other elements of Mobutu's defeated forces seized key strongholds in the west, including Boma and Mbandaka and the important oil pipeline to the coast. Already fearing the worst last weekend, Kabila took refuge at Lubumbashi, in his home region of Katanga, and appealed to the others to save him.

The first indication that the other governments in the region would be prepared to prop up his falling regime came from Kenya's minister for foreign affairs, Godana, who warned last week that the rebels might have to defeat the Kenyan army in order to take Kinshasa. While the Kenyans issued threats, Zimbabwe and Angola acted more decisively. Zimbabwean troops were flown into Kinshasa on Wednesday. MIG jets of the Zimbabwean air force bombed the rebels to the west of the capital.

At the same time, battle-hardened Angolan troops entered western Congo from the Cabinda enclave. This support emboldened Kabila to return to Kinshasa, from where he is now rallying local support and insisting that "the rebels will lose the war".

The armies of five African countries are now embroiled in the struggle to control Congo. In the process, two of Kabila's once strongest allies, Uganda and Rwanda, have become his most dangerous enemies. There is the very real possibility of a long-running conflagration, with the control of the country being divided between the rebels in the eastern and northern portions and Kabila's forces in the west and south. Stability seems further away than ever.

How has it come to this? Things began to go wrong for Kabila last month, when he fell out with his Rwandan and Ugandan allies. Since being swept to power 18 months ago by a rag-bag army that was bolstered by regular forces from these two neighbouring countries, Kabila has been unable - or perhaps unwilling - to pay his dues. Although it is not clear what prompted the final break between Kabila and his Rwandan allies, ethnic politics was very much to the fore. With Kabila dragging his feet



Recruits to the Congolese army - one of five battling over the nation - having their heads shaved for military service

over the status of the large ethnic Tutsi population living in eastern Congo, the Rwandans and Ugandans decided to act. Eastern Congo has been destabilised over the past decade or more by the impact of wars fought in Uganda, with the Tanzanian-backed campaign to bring Museveni's National Resistance Army to power, and then in Rwanda in the wake of the Hutu genocide against Tutsis and moderate Hutu elements.

As a consequence, eastern Congo contains a combustible mixture of heavily armed dissident forces and vulnerable refugee communities. There are fears of another genocide, this time within eastern Congo, as local Bantu peoples turn upon Tutsi communities who they see and fear as the cause of their current misery and a danger to their future security. If such reports are confirmed in any degree they will serve to escalate the conflict further still. In the fraught politics of the present conflict, Kabila has himself played the ethnic card by describing the rebel forces as a "Tutsi invasion" of Congo.

If Rwanda can best justify its opposition to Kabila in terms of the need to secure its borders from attack, the official Ugandan line is much the same. As Ugandan forces entered Congo through Arua on Tuesday last, riding armoured per-

sonnel carriers bought with a loan from the US, Museveni's government claimed only to be concerned to hunt down the soldiers of the Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF), a group which has been operating against the Kampala government from bases within Congo. On Tuesday last the ADF was blamed for three bombs that exploded on Ugandan buses travelling to the Rwandan capital of Kigali. But the surface-to-air missiles carried by Ugandan troops are surely intended to redress the balance against Angolan air power.

Angola's intervention, like that of Rwanda and Uganda, can be explained in terms of regional security. Jonas Savimbi's Unita guerrillas have long used supply bases in Congo in their war against the Angolan government, and they were covertly supported by Mobutu's government. The Angolans helped Kabila come to power on the understanding that he would prevent Unita operating out of Congo. The ceasefire between Unita and the Angolan MPLA government has given Kabila more breathing space here than on his eastern frontier, and so his Angolan friends have less cause for dissatisfaction than have his former Ugandan and Rwandan allies. But they also have fewer alternatives. The Angolan government claims

that Unita has some 25,000 troops in Congo and greatly fears the consequences of this force being remobilised.

To understand Zimbabwe's role is more difficult. One aspect is certainly Kabila's credentials as an active supporter of Mugabe's own struggle for power in Zimbabwe. But if the bonds of past comradeship linking Kabila to Mugabe seem stronger than those to Museveni, it must also be realised that Zimbabwe's regional perspective is markedly different to Uganda's. A protracted struggle in Congo, with Kabila falling back upon support in his home region of Katanga, would certainly have severe repercussions for the beleaguered economies of both Zambia and Zimbabwe. Mugabe appears to have gambled that a small-scale intervention can be successful.

The conflict in Congo starkly illustrates the lack of agreement among African governments over questions of foreign policy and security. Although regional groupings do exist in east and southern Africa that allow for regular discussion of policy at ministerial level, consensus is rarely achieved. In East Africa the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) provides a forum for the discussion of internal conflicts such as Sudan's civil war, but Uganda and

Kenya are bitterly divided over the Congo situation, while Tanzania has tried to remain neutral, even withdrawing its military trainers from Kinshasa when the rebellion broke out. For the 14 members of the South African Development Community (SADC), the Congo crisis has been even more traumatic. After initially meeting to debate the matter and apparently deciding to broker a settlement without military intervention, Angola and Zimbabwe broke ranks to the embarrassment of South Africa and President Mandela, who chairs the group.

There is no doubt that the South Africans had hoped to solve the Congo problem without military intervention. Now that it has happened it is difficult to see how it will come to a speedy conclusion. South Africa's regional influence has been damaged, and with it the hopes of the US and the West that a new age of stability was emerging in Africa. The African renaissance may be coming, but it will not be delivered by the likes of Laurent Kabila. It seems more likely that he will find himself at the centre of a long-running struggle and ruler of a partitioned country.

David M. Anderson teaches at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London

RIGHT OF REPLY

SARAH TYACKE



The Keeper of Public Records answers criticisms of government secrecy in a leading article

YOUR LEADER draws attention to recent releases of records at the Public Record Office, but it goes on to suggest that much remains hidden. Two points are helpful here. First, the great majority of public records are released when they become 30 years old. Secondly, more than 85,000 documents have been released since the Open Government Initiative was launched in 1992. These records were either less than 30 years old or they had previously been judged too sensitive for release.

We are, of course, pleased that the media have found recent releases of interest, but the stories over the past few months have not reflected the full range of records now becoming available. The release of records is a collective effort involving staff across government: the records are ultimately seen at the PRO, but it is for each department to identify material for early release.

But the process is not left to officials: it is overseen by the Advisory Council on Public Records, a statutory body whose members include representatives of the political parties and the research communities (see our website at www.pro.gov.uk). The Council's approach to these matters is shaped by the criteria on access to public records in the 1939 White Paper on Open Government.

In the new White Paper *Your Right to Know*, this Government stated its wish that access rights to historic records should be modernised in line with its Freedom of Information proposals. It added that the 30-year rule - which is in line with international practice - would be kept. Releases in the last few months have shown that this does not prevent early access to records. Further releases are to follow - and that should be a cause for satisfaction.

Winning the propaganda war

BRITISH INTELLIGENCE in America from 1940 onwards was organised into a single agency headed by a Canadian businessman, William Stephenson. He was the "Quiet Canadian" of H. Montgomery Hyde's 1962 biography, and the "Man Called Intrepid" of the 1976 book by his near-namesake and fellow-Canadian, William Stevenson. Around his name have clustered an increasing number of myths, until there was hardly a single new revelation about British intelligence activities anywhere which was not followed by some claim that Stephenson had been its originator. In the last few years, refuting these claims has become a minor historical industry in its own right.

This book embodies what Stephenson saw as his final report at the end of the war. It requires the most careful reading. Naïve Americans, both academics and press reviewers, have taken it as gospel. I have already seen one overheated study of "British propaganda" in the United States which claims that every American an-



THURSDAY BOOK

BRITISH SECURITY CO-ORDINATION: THE SECRET HISTORY OF BRITISH INTELLIGENCE IN THE AMERICAS, 1940-1945
EDITED BY NIGEL WEST, LITTLE, BROWN/ST ERMIN'S PRESS, £30

ti-phile, every American opponent of Hitler in the years before Pearl Harbor, was a "British agent". Even Nigel West, in his otherwise valuable introduction, remarks on the "willingness of American radio commentators to publish foreign propaganda".

It is true that those concerned professionally with winning American support against Hitler preferred to let American publicists carry their message. But these were the same commentators who had been lambasting Britain for most of the 1930s for not standing up to Hitler.

Today's young men - and many of their elders who should know better - talk of propaganda as if it had no persuasive content. They refuse to recognise that the contest with Hitler from 1933 was about beliefs at least as much as about interests or national identity - if not more.

Which brings us to the most important question any historian has to ask of a document. What was its originator's agenda? What audience was it aimed at? What result was it intended to achieve? Nigel West tells us that only a very limited number of copies of this report were made; that Stephenson so disliked the first draft that he had it rewritten by, among others, Roald Dahl, before his career as a children's author. And it is difficult to imagine anything less like an official report than this compendium of spy stories, Mata Hari-esque intrigues and wide claims to success, if not omniscience.

A careful study of Stephenson's own foreword suggests that the aim of his report was to promote the postwar establishment of a single British intelligence agency. This would unite MI6, MI8, Bletchley Park's decipherers, the intelligence services of the three armed forces and the industrial intelligence agencies under a single head. No prizes for guessing his name.

In pursuing this aim, Stephenson made at least one statement that he must have known was untrue. He argued that the success of American intelligence resulted from the concept of co-ordinated operations. Yet this was a country whose naval and military intelligence services divided their work on Japanese ciphers according to the day of the week of each intercept. They could only be induced to co-operate by the British signing separate agreements with the two agencies!

It really is about time for some serious debunking of this document, the origin of so much media oxen deposit. It would help, too, if it could have been critically edited by someone capable



Roald Dahl helped write this work of 'fiction'

of correlating it both with the American records, and with the German documentation on diplomatic and political activities in Latin America, as well as in the US. In fact, the contribution made by British Security Co-ordination to the victory of the western powers is itself in need of the most serious re-evaluation - in a downwards direction.

Stephenson always liked to see himself in comparison with his First World War predecessor, Sir William Wiseman. But Wiseman acted as the main conduit for communications between President Woodrow Wilson and the British government. Then, there was a major German sabotage effort at work in America, and a large Germanic minority with German sympathies. There was nothing remotely comparable in the US in the Second World War.

In fact, to accept any of the claims made in this document at face value would risk the most serious distortion of the historical record. In the meantime, this book should be treated as Nigel West tells us William Stephenson's supposed biography of "Intrepid" was treated by American libraries. That is, it should be read as the historical fiction it is. As such, it makes a good read. But it should be treated as a historical curiosity, not as the unquestionable - let alone the unvarnished - truth.

DONALD CAMERON WATT

THURSDAY POEM

LATE QUARTET
FOR ANDZEJ
BY RUTH VALENTINE

My daughter cries for me in the night,
her skin red as the sky over Warsaw burning.
I hold her hands against my cool white shirt
and carry her back to Beethoven

who grieves with a dignity she understands
for both of us. This dying Cavatina
my brother played in Warsaw once,
turning away from me with his violin.

I have put up words to blockade this memory
but listen to chamber music at night
till two or three, my daughter on my lap;
her small hands raw with digging
a tunnel for both of us to him in her dreams.

Our poems today and tomorrow come from Ruth Valentine's first collection, *The Tide Table*, published by Slow Dancer Press (£6.99).

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Published by The European Medical Journal

Allan Macartney

ALLAN MACARTNEY was one of the most decent people in politics. He had a degree of influence on Scottish affairs that will have been concealed from many people by his relative lack of public acclaim. He had neither time nor talent for self-publicisation. He was a very good man, but without an ounce of false piety, and he was one of the funniest and wittiest companions you could imagine.

His sudden death leaves a sore gap in Scottish public life in a critical year. In Europe also, many will mourn the passing of a good European. In the European Parliament, he was a member who wholeheartedly believed in its capacity to build a proper European democracy. He was sincerely but unobtrusively Christian, an elder of the Kirk who gave good service on the Church and Nation Committee. He was a devoted family man, for all the demands politics imposed on his time. He was an inspiring teacher and student of politics, for whom the Open University was the ideal academic forum. He was elected Rector of Aberdeen University in 1997, and chaired the University Court with wisdom and panache.

Above all, he was a patriotic Scot and a tireless worker for the restoration of his country to its proper place among the nations of Europe and the world. His election as Senior Vice-Convenor (deputy leader) of the Scottish National Party in 1992 was the culmination of years of dedicated commitment over the long years that followed the SNP's electoral debacle of 1974.

His emphatic victory in the North-East of Scotland in the European election of 1994 was a deserved triumph, adding a much valued foil to Winnie Ewing's long, heroic stand as sole SNP representative in Europe. That election was one of the first fruits of the revival in SNP fortunes to which Macartney's contribution, though over-looked, had been profound.

His formidable command of languages served him well in his European work. Long before election as MEP he had kept active contacts in Flanders, Bavaria, Catalonia, Brittany, the Basque country, the Faeroes, the Aland Islands and other parts of Europe that were submerged in the imperial state-building of the 19th century, and sought, like Scotland, to re-emerge before the 21st.

Nationalism is a political stance with which many are uneasy, having acquired the reputation of such evil bedfellows as racism, chauvinism, ethnic exclusiveness, intolerance and worse. Allan Macartney believed and showed that these are pathological excrescences on nationalism, not its essence. He was a living embodiment of the nationalism that is

tolerant, inclusive, and universalist in outlook and commitment. For him, the fundamental principle in politics was that of self-determination for individuals and for peoples.

His African experiences left a profound mark on him, both his teenage years when his father was working as a missionary in present-day Ghana, and subsequently when he took up his own first job, as a university teacher in Botswana. That period of work led eventually to his PhD on the politics of Botswana, completed under the tutelage of the late John P. Mackintosh, and later to work on the principle of self-determination in the Commonwealth.

Constitutional questions were at the heart of his work. He served on the committee that in 1977 produced the SNP's draft constitution for an independent Scotland. The principles of a liberal, civic nationalism in which he believed are captured in that document, and were enhanced in the revision of 1991 to which he gave a lead.

In 1996, he convened a committee of experts mainly from outside the SNP to report on how to achieve

He was a living embodiment of the nationalism that is tolerant, inclusive, and universalist in outlook and commitment

a transition to independence. Their report charts these potentially treacherous waters. The existence of this calm, undramatic explanation of the transition process will greatly serve the common good if, or when, the moment arrives. He was wise in his ability to think ahead to the moment of crisis in which a pre-considered position is required. It is one of the qualities for which he will be sadly irreplaceable.

The introduction of party-list systems of proportional representation for the Scottish and the European parliamentary elections of 1999 has called for new procedures in all the parties. Allan Macartney was in charge of the SNP's adaptation to this, and made sure that the process was a fully democratic one that gave grass-roots members the key role in selection.

The widely felt alarm over a surrender of popular democracy to



Macartney, left, with Alex Salmond, celebrating the SNP's success in the 1994 European Parliament campaign

party-machine politics has no application to the schemes he devised. (Or, at least, as little as it could have to any scheme that satisfies the new electoral laws.) He was hard at work overseeing the European selection process till this very week, and spoke to me on the telephone about it just hours before his fatal heart attack. I fear he spent too much of himself in this and all his work.

Allan Macartney and I met when we were students, he at Edinburgh University and I at Glasgow. In 1981, he led the process of founding, or re-establishing, the Federation of Student Nationalists, linking together nationalist clubs and associations in all the universities and colleges. At the time, our contemporaries considered us harmless eccentrics, but Macartney already foresaw the change in the Scottish mind-set that a new world and hard work would produce.

Over 40 years he was one of my best friends, my political conscience who kept me from retreating completely into academic life. He had a marvellous sense of humour and of fun, and as little malice as it is possible for a witty person to possess. It is hard to believe that never again will the phone's ring presage a greeting with a joke in bad Gaelic—we were both lifelong learners who never completed the job—and a chuckle and then some mildly conspiratorial adjuration to stop neglecting the project of the day. A beacon has gone out for me, the afterglow will still inspire.

NEL MACCORMICK

As Deputy Leader of the Scottish National Party Allan Macartney left his beloved country poised at the point of selecting candidates for its first parliament since 1707, writes Angus Calder.

"National", not "Nationalist" Party. The first thing you learnt about Allan was that he cared as passionately for the peoples of Southern Africa and for the Sami minority of Northern Scandinavia as he did for his folk in North-East Scotland.

Scots for him were one people in a mosaic of equal peoples. The MEP job specification might have been written for him. Beside several African tongues, and pidgin Gaelic, he spoke German, French and Dutch. As a political scientist he was particularly interested in the constitutional issues facing Europe (and Scotland) which baffled and bore even most "politically minded" people.

The Open University in Scotland gave him an academic base in Edinburgh as Staff Tutor in Social Science. I joined him there in 1979 as Staff Tutor in Arts and can testify to the pleasures and strains of that very peculiar role. Responsible for ap-

pointing and supervising scores of part-time staff from Galloway to Shetland, we also had the academic duty of contributing to courses created in Milton Keynes. And if we didn't keep stuck in there, our pleasant English colleagues would forget that Scotland had a different legal system, different educational traditions, an Established Church of its own and a richly distinctive cultural history. So—Stornoway Tuesday, Milton Keynes Thursday.

There were no academic seminars in the OU Edinburgh office. Instead, we academics on flexitime lingered after lunch in the pub round the corner where Allan, red wine in hand, puffing the short cigars which were his one obvious weakness, tended to function as orchestra conductor of remarkable symposia which included his neo-Marxist colleague Greg MacLennan (son of the CPGB Secretary General), the mav-

erick Tory Home Ruler Michael Fry, a historian like my own alter ego, Ian Donnachie, and any full-time or part-time staff who cared to join in. Remaining good-humoured as our Senior Counsellor colleague Henry Cowper enjoyed his politically incorrect flytings against women and social scientists, and indulged his Old Labour anti-nationalism, was one of Allan's peculiar graces, as was his utter straightforwardness.

He was one of few Scots outside pipe-bands who could wear a kilt without exciting jeers. His marriage to Anne Forsyth straightforwardly endured while his colleagues crumbled, and he leaves three children and four grandchildren. As a political scientist, he was practical, interested in voting systems and the legalities and mechanics of home rule. Though no philistine, he wasn't into fancy Gramscian cultural nationalism.

In politics, he sought, not self-aggrandisement, but political solutions to problems which he understood politically. As an Honorary Fellow of Edinburgh University, he set up a notable conference there in 1986 on "Self-Determination in the Commonwealth", and the democratic right of all peoples to self-determination was the liberal groundrock of his own politics. On other issues, he was an uncomplicated social democrat, fully in tune with the SNP's leftward shift in the 1980s. He didn't go on about religion, but one knew that regular worship in the Church of Scotland sustained him.

His former OU colleagues in the administrative and secretarial departments have been in tears. Allan, liked by all, was the natural MC for Christmas parties or our annual "Burns Lunches". My own loving memory has him, paper hat on head, filthy Italian cigar in hand, leading us over empty wine bottles into a patriotic song, Hamish Healderson's great "Freedom Come All Ye", say, in which "A black boy frae yont Nyanga / Dings the fell gillows of the burghers doon."

William John Allan Macartney, political scientist and politician: born Accra, Ghana 17 February 1941; teacher, Eastern Nigeria 1963-64; Lecturer in Government and Administration, University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland 1966-74; Staff Tutor in Politics, Open University 1975-94; SNP spokesman on foreign affairs 1987-98; Deputy Leader, SNP 1992-98; MEP (SNP) for North East Scotland 1994-98; Vice-President, EP Fisheries Committee 1997-98; Rector, Aberdeen University 1997-98; married 1963 Anne Forsyth (two sons, one daughter); died Aberdeen 25 August 1998.

E. G. Marshall

ONE OF America's finest character actors, E. G. Marshall will be remembered by television viewers of the Sixties for his Emmy Award-winning role as half of a father-son team of lawyers in the superior crime series *The Defenders*.

The often bespectacled actor frequently found himself in legal roles—among his most notable were those of a juror in *Twelve Angry Men* and the patiently determined prosecuting attorney in *Compulsion*. On stage, he was in the first Broadway productions of *The Iceman Cometh*, *The Crucible* and *Waiting for Godot*, while both on radio and television his authoritative voice brought him prolific work as a narrator and in commercials. He modestly called himself a "utility actor who fits in easily" but his work was far more distinguished than that self-assessment would suggest.

The son of Norwegians, Marshall was born in Owatonna, Minnesota, in 1910. He was secretive about the middle G. of his name and suggested at different times that his initials might stand for "Edda Gunnar" or "Enigma Gregarious", although the truth of the matter may now never be known (his nickname, however, was "Eg"). He was educated at Carlton College and the University of Minnesota, and his first ambition was to enter the Episcopal ministry but he abandoned this when he realised that he was agnostic.

In 1932 he made his radio debut in St Paul and then worked in Theatre Guild on the Air in Chicago. Now set on an acting career, he joined the Oxford Players, a touring Shakespearean repertory company, in 1933. He made his Broadway debut in 1938 with a Federal Theatre Project production, *Prologue to Glory*. He took over the role of Mr Fitzpatrick in Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942), played the Brigadier in *Jacobowsky and the Colonel* (1944) and Willie Oban in *The Iceman Cometh* (1946).

Always keen to improve his craft, he became part of the Actors Studio when it was formed by Ella Kazan and Robert Lewis in 1947. He created the role of the Rev John Hale



Marshall, left, with Robert Reed in *The Defenders*

in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953) and later took over the leading role of John Proctor. He won great acclaim when he played the derelict philosopher Vladimir in the Broadway premiere of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1956), and vehemently defended the play as a positive, life-affirming work. "Godot is a real theatre piece," he said. "The theatre today is too flaccid, too passive, too dull. It is good to have it stirred up by a piece like this."

He made his film debut (billed as Everett Marshall) as a morgue attendant in Henry Hathaway's landmark thriller *The House on 92nd Street* (1945). Based on the true story of Nazi agents seeking the formula for the atom bomb, its documentary-style approach started a new genre, and Marshall was in two more Hathaway films shot in similar style—*13 Rue Madeleine* (1946) and *Call Northside 777* (1948).

By the time he returned to films in 1954 after concentrating on theatre and television, he was being billed as E. G. Marshall and had established a reputation for excelling in figures of authority and integrity, and played such roles in *The Caine Mutiny* (1954) and *Pushover* (1954).

In Sidney Lumet's fine version of Reginald Rose's play *Twelve Angry Men* (1957), Marshall was the implacable Juror Four who, along with 10 of the other jurors, wants to pass a verdict of guilty but is eventually persuaded by the dogged Juror Eight (Henry Fonda) to change his opinion. In *Compulsion* (1959), based on the notorious Leopold-Loeb murder case, Marshall was at his finest as the diligent prosecuting attorney, holding his own against a scene-stealing performance by Orson Welles as the defence lawyer.

It was as a lawyer, the father and senior partner in the firm Preston

and Preston in the television series *The Defenders* (1961) that Marshall found greatest fame. "I'd been on television for years, in over 400 roles," he said in 1982, "but nobody seemed to recognise me on the streets or in restaurants. Now people are likely to turn around and look at me." The show, with Robert Reed playing Marshall's son, ran for five years, and won Marshall two Emmys. A staunch liberal Democrat, he was delighted that the show earned a reputation for dealing with controversial subjects—in one 1962 episode his character defended an abortionist, and the network, CBS, ran the show despite protests by viewers and cancelled advertising.

Marshall credited the show with deepening his concern about constitutional liberties and leading him to take a course in jurisprudence. He was instrumental in getting a black judge added to the series, aided documentaries on deprived groups in society and volunteered to help legal rights groups.

He starred in another hit television series, *The New Doctors*, from 1969 to 1973, again playing a role of integrity as the head of a combination hospital and research centre dedicated to finding new medical techniques. Marshall's later film roles included military officials in *Paris Burning?* (1965), *The Bridge at Remagen* (1968) and *Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970), and the US President in *Superman II* (1980).

Last year he was seen in the important role of an ageing tycoon whose wife is murdered by Gene Hackman (whom he ultimately kills) in Clint Eastwood's *Absolute Power*. He recently completed two television movies based on *The Defenders*, with his son now played by Beau Bridges.

TOM VALLANCE

Everett G. Marshall, actor: born Owatonna, Minnesota 13 June 1910; married 1931 Helen Wolf (one son, one daughter; marriage dissolved 1953), second Judith Coy (two sons, one daughter); died Mount Kisco, New York 24 August 1998.

Manuel Azcaráte

THE SPANISH Communist leader Manuel Azcaráte was distinguished by his passionate internationalism, inspired both by a diplomatic childhood in European embassies and his free-thinking family, several of whose members influenced Spanish progressive thought from the turn of the century.

In his memoirs, *Derrotas y esperanzas* (1994), Azcaráte describes how, as a teenager in the 1930s, he astonished his comrades in the Geneva branch of the Young Communists as he rolled up to meetings in the chauffeur-driven Oldsmobile of his father, Pablo, who was Assistant Secretary General of the League of Nations, embryo of the UN.

Pablo Azcaráte was ambassador in London for the Spanish Republic from 1932 to 1936. Young Manuel, aged 18, spent some time studying at the London School of Economics where he came to know Professor Harold Laski, who crucially influenced his decision to become a Communist. He studied Law and Economics at the University of Madrid in 1933 and in 1934 became a member of the Young Communists' executive committee.

When the Civil War began in 1936, he became editor of the left-wing paper *La Hora* and joined the 11th Division of the Republican Army. On Franco's victory in 1939 he fled to exile in France and in 1941, under Nazi occupation, began reorganising the Communists against the occupying forces, starting only from the addresses, committed to memory, of a few sympathisers in Paris. He edited a number of clandestine newspapers including *Mundo Nuevo* ("New World") and *Nuestra Bandera* ("Our Flag").

Azcaráte remained in France until 1973, with a long period between 1959 and 1964 spent in Moscow. He was to conclude that Russian Communism was a failure—but because it was distorted by nationalism, not because the ideas of Marx and Engels were wrong. He continued to believe it was possible for European Communism to be open and civilised. The phenomenon of Eurocommunism emerged in the late 1970s

as an attempt by some West European CPs to break from Stalinism's dead hand and take a less sectarian line towards other working-class parties. The trend, pioneered by the Italians, was taken up by the French Communists and the newly legalised Spanish party, each seeking an electoral alliance with democratic socialists to isolate the right.

Anti-Stalinists on the left of the British Labour Party—a reduced but energetic group around Eric Heffer MP—were eager to encourage what they saw as a promising process of Communist democratisation and, in an unprecedented move, invited a number of Eurocommunists to attend Labour's annual conference in 1978.

Manuel Azcaráte, responsible for the Spanish Communist Party's international policy, was a perfect representative for the Spaniards, with his sweet manners, impeccable English and years of direct experience of Stalin's rule. Later that year, a young assistant in Labour's international department who had helped him during his visit was surprised and gratified to receive an affectionate Christmas card.

But the Eurocommunist adventure was never convincing in Spain, whose party held fast to Stalinist methods despite preaching democratic ideas. The socialists led by Felipe Gonzalez were viscerally opposed to any Communist rapprochement and showed by their sweeping electoral victory in 1982 that they needed no Communist help to win power in post-Franco democracy.

That year, aged 65 and having been a Communist since 17, Azcaráte was expelled from the party. He wrote the book *La crisis del eurocomunismo* ("The Crisis of Eurocommunism", 1982)—a part analysis, part autobiography—to try to explain what had happened to his party and his life. He became a journalist and commentator for a number of newspapers before settling with El País, where he wrote a weekly column on international affairs until a couple of months ago. In 1986 he wrote *La izquierda Eu-*



Azcaráte: Eurocommunism

ropa ("The European Left") about the dilemma facing socialists in a period of world recession and Soviet collapse. His memoirs, *Derrotas y esperanzas: la República, la Guerra Civil y la Resistencia* ("Defeat and Hope: the Republic, the Civil War and the Resistance"), followed testimonies of his distinguished former comrades Fernando Claudin and Jorge Semprun in tracing how someone committed to fighting Fascism from the first stamp of the jackboot was eventually squeezed out of a party that was gripped by intrigue and dogma. But he never became cynical or bitter.

I often bumped into him as he padded the corridors of El País, where *The Independent* has an office, and he would lucidly explain his thinking on this or that, with his low voice, his myopic gaze through thick spectacles somewhat flat and dimmed latterly by a two-year fight against cancer. Yesterday a colleague pinned up a valedictory note on the canteen noticeboard that concluded: "So long, Don Manuel. You were wise, and you were a gent."

ELIZABETH NASH

Juan Manuel Azcaráte Díaz, politician and writer: born Madrid 7 October 1916; married Esther Jiménez Milagro (one son, one daughter); died Madrid 24 August 1998.

CHRIS MCGOWAN

Post Gazette announcements to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, telephone 0171-293 2012 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2011) or fax to 0171-293 2010. Please give a daytime telephone number.

A home away from home

UK foster parents are providing a healthy lifeline for Belarussian children suffering from severe radiation contamination. By Darius Sanai

Five years before Katja Laponova was born, there was an explosion about 300 miles from the farming village where her parents-to-be were living. News at the time was scarce, and nobody heard much about the consequences of the blast. Katja is running around a meadow on Blackdown Hill on the border of Surrey and Sussex. She grins, her yellow dress a blur amid the overgrown grass, but as she passes an apple tree, she stops beside her friend Nastya. The eight-year-old takes her friend's hand and they walk along clutching each other, heads down, not saying much.

Like the other Belarussian children around them, they look young for their age - small, slim and fragile. Katja doesn't speak much, even in her native Russian, and her eyes are filled with a distant blankness. The effects of that explosion are now evident across Katja's homeland. Cases of children's cancer have jumped 60-fold since Chernobyl's nuclear reactor blew up in April 1986; the number of children in the area with thyroid cancer has increased by a factor of 50. Belarussians have the world's highest rate of children's leukaemia, brain tumours and kidney cancer.

Katja was born half a decade after the meltdown in neighbouring Ukraine, but caesium radiation still lingers in the region's produce and water, and affects every mother and child.

In a week's time Katja will go home, along with Nastya and more than a thousand other young Belarussians who have spent the summer in private homes across Britain. They have had a dream summer holiday, courtesy of a charity and hundreds of British people, many of whom paid for their air fares and their entire stay.

Some people from their country are staying longer. Last week Vasya Kurhako - a 16-year-old orphan whose jaw has been severely dis-

likely to be allowed to remain here as long as his adoption papers can be completed - something the McCafferys' solicitor, Anne Guthrie, says she is confident will happen.

Vasya, who has no family at home and needs a major operation on his cleft palate - may be one of the luckier ones. There are now about 2,000 Belarussian children in Britain. Many of them, like Katja and Nastya, have loving parents at home, but each day in their homeland they eat the products of the irradiated soil of one of Europe's most impoverished countries.

The children are here courtesy of Chernobyl Children's Lifeline, a Surrey-based charity that organises visits by more than 3,000 eight-to-16-year-olds every year for two or three months. Victor Mizzi, the charity's director, started it seven years ago after visiting Minsk, the Belarus capital. "Practically every child in Belarus is affected by Chernobyl radiation, and it will continue for generations after generation," he says. In his Tudor cottage on the Surrey-Sussex border, the retired businessman has an album of photographs he took on a visit to the city's children's hospital. Kids pose un-self-consciously with deformities that make the eyes water: a small boy with tumours growing out of every part of his body; a girl with hands instead of feet.

The Belarussian children sitting quietly in his back garden, guarded by their English "parents", look quite normal at first. They are beau-



Katja - who is eight, but looks five or six because of radiation - enjoys life away from a contaminated landscape Neville Elder

Almost every child in Belarus is affected, and it will continue for generations

figured by the radiation he ingested when he was four years old - came to the nation's attention when it emerged that the Home Office was threatening to send him home, away from his adoptive Scottish parents, because his immigration papers were out of order. His foster-mother in Dumfries, Chrissie McCaffery, said she would prefer to go to jail for defying the Government than send Vasya - who has been here for five years - back home.

But the deportation order has now been suspended pending a review and Home Office sources told *The Independent* that Vasya was

tiful kids, fine-featured, with high cheekbones, clear complexions and lovely blue or green eyes. Ksenya and Sveta are 16 and 17, and, after nine visits between them, including a stint for each in a Kent boarding school, they speak near-perfect English. What does Sveta think of England now? "It's alright," she intones approvingly. How long was Ksenya at boarding school (paid for by her English "parents")? "Six months." Did she like it? "Yeah." There is obviously a lot more in these girls' minds, but they are shy. Were they looking forward to going back? There was a hesitation: yes, they were looking forward to seeing their families and friends, but they were not looking forward to going back. Details were unforthcoming. They sounded like normal enough teenage girls until the photographer asked them to stroll around for some pictures, and then something dawned: they looked 13 or 14 years

old, not the late teens they really are. More poignant was Katja, who is eight years old but looks five or six. Instinctive and sharp, but monosyllabic, she answers questions rapidly. Did she like Britain? "Da." What was her favourite thing here? "The pub." Was she looking forward to going home? There was a minuscule pause. "Da." Her sharp blue eyes clouded over.

Kostya is 14, smart and virtually fluent in English. He had had, he told me matter-of-factly, an operation to remove a tumour on his lungs when he was eight and one to remove a brain tumour when he was 10. He is now fully recovered. Kostya is good-looking and engaging: when he accompanied Victor Mizzi on a trip to Canada last month, all the girls in the class he visited fell in love with him. He wants to be a fighter pilot. Was he looking forward to going home? "Not really," he says. There is much more to the trips than

pampering and the tourist trail. Some children receive treatment for their radiation sickness - leukaemia, thyroid cancer, brain tumours and physical defects are more than 200 times more common in children from Minsk than in children from Macclesfield, and many other suffer "minor" effects such as jaw and gum problems. Having lived most of their lives on irradiated food, much of it low in nutrients, their immune systems are dangerously vulnerable.

A couple of months over here eating a proper diet of uncontaminated food will have enormous positive effects on their health," says Paul Campbell, a consultant orthopaedic surgeon in Chester who last year operated, free of charge, on a visiting Belarussian child disfigured at birth by radiation.

One of the children's consultants in Belarus was quoted last year as saying that "two months in Britain is worth two years at

home", in terms of the children's physical development.

Mr Mizzi tours Belarus three times a year looking for parents who want to send their children abroad: many, he says, "are queuing up" to get their children on a visit, having seen the effects on those who have returned. Demand is so great that British host parents who want to receive a visit from the same child often have to pay for it themselves; those who have not come before are first in the queue.

"You can see the change after a few weeks," enthuses Doreen Anill, who hosts Ksenya, Sveta and Ludmila. "They look healthier, their skin glows, and they're smiling and more confident." After lunch, the children leave with their hosts, a vaguely incongruous group, but a happy one nonetheless. This time next week the youngsters will be back in a place where caesium 137 runs through the veins of everyone they know.

'His teachers thought he was being naughty'

Dyslexic children with high IQs need special help. By Nicole Veash

ALEXANDER FALUDY is an extraordinary 15-year-old. He suffers from severe dyslexia, can write only two illegible words a minute and has the so-called "clumsy child syndrome", or dyspraxia. Despite this he has been awarded a place at Cambridge University to study theology and art history.

Had he been able to go to university in September he would have become the youngest undergraduate since William Pitt the Younger. But on Tuesday the Faludy family lost a High Court battle to force their local authority to fund the special help Alexander needs.

His parents, Andrew and Tanya, both English teachers, had asked Portsmouth City Council for between £5,000 and £10,000 a year to pay for one-to-one help and special equipment to enable their son to study for his degree.

However, the presiding judge ruled that the local authority had no statutory obligation to fund special needs for anybody in higher education. Although the family say they

are bitterly disappointed, they have pledged to continue campaigning.

Clearly, Alexander is remarkable. His phenomenal IQ, way off the normal scale, allowed him to dictate an analysis of *Othello* at eight and at nine he became the youngest person to pass an English GCSE.

But it is all too easy to dismiss this story as a one-off. It's so unusual to have someone brilliantly adept on the one hand and so inept on the other. Yet Alexander should not be dismissed as an educational "freak", because he is not alone.

When Corrine Pittman read about Alexander Faludy she realised that someone out there was experiencing the same difficulties and dilemmas as her own son.

For years Corrine and her husband Nick had struggled with their often frustrated but brilliant son Alec. At the age of seven he had an IQ of 144, but had difficulties cutting his food or writing a single sentence.

"We knew Alec was a bright child but had no real idea how clever he was," Corrine says. It was as though he missed out on the baby and toddler stage and went straight on to being a child.

When Alec enrolled at school the Pitmans thought nothing of him having difficulties with his work.

"When a child is five or six it's acceptable for them to have problems with writing and learning," Corrine says. "Only when they get



Corrine Pittman: 'When a child is older the teachers think they are playing up' Ruti Xavier

older do the teachers think they are deliberately playing up if they don't progress. Because Alec had an inquisitive mind he used to ask a lot of questions. The teachers thought he was just being naughty and his opinion was confirmed as he got older; when they realised he couldn't manage his classroom."

Alec, like many unusually bright children, withdrew into himself. He stopped asking challenging questions and, his mother says, became depressed and lethargic and developed a nervous tic that needed medical treatment. Eventually his parents withdrew him from school and taught him at home.

"Obviously his teachers had never come across anyone like Alec before. One even said that they didn't know what to do with him. At that point we decided to take him to an educational psychologist, who said he had an IQ that put him in the top 0.2 per cent of the population. She also said Alec had dyslexic tenden-

cies and attention deficit disorder." During his eight months at home Alec's confidence returned, and his parents enrolled him into another school, this time in the state sector.

"His teachers were supportive but still they didn't understand his problems, and it is easy to see why. Because he is bright he can distract attention away from his own problems and pretend to be an ordinary Joe," Corrine says.

Unlike Alexander, Alec's intellectual capacity has been hampered by a difficulty in reading. He once described words on the page as misbehaving little ants which move around all the time. This leaves the 10-year-old in the strange situation of finding his schoolwork both too easy and too difficult.

Alec excels in oral work. He's got a dictaphone and occasionally he will dictate his school work into it and give it to a friend to transcribe for him. But he can barely write more than a couple of sentences. The school recently allowed him to use a word processor which has helped him enormously," Corrine says.

The way forward for Alec may be with a computer rather than a pen, but for this gifted child saddled with special educational needs, his family admit that technology alone is not going to be enough.

"At the moment Alec is lucky if he gets half an hour special needs help a week. We don't want to take him

out of school again because he has started to enjoy the social side of things. Unfortunately it is all a question of resources and red tape," his mother says.

Nothing Alec does is automatic. He has had to learn everything, from making a cup of tea to writing the letter E on a piece of paper. He can't cope with classroom pressure and the neuro-developmental delay from which he suffers can make him appear slow. Yet despite all his problems, he has the intellectual potential to do great things.

"Just because Alec has a high IQ it doesn't mean he is going to get on OK. We are certainly not going to put any pressures on him to do brilliant things, because he wouldn't be able to cope with that type of demand." Like Alexander, Alec would benefit from full-time educational help to capitalise on his IQ, but the Pitmans do not want to push their gifted son down the academic path.

"We have to let Alec find his own levels," says Corrine. "It's no good our son having this brilliant brain if he is not comfortable about using it. I'm just relieved that on our own predicament, if people accept that some children may be very bright but still have learning difficulties, it will save other families some of the heartache we've been through. There are other people like Alec out there. They just need the recognition."

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NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR NEW JUSTICES LICENCE

LICENSING ACT 1964

COURT: The Court House, Dovercourt, Norwich

HEARING DATE/TIME: Friday 18 September 1998 at 10am

PROMISES: 3 Marine Parade, East, Gorton, Essex

APPLICANT: Graham Campbell

ADDRESS: 48 Wilford Road, Ipswich, Suffolk

TRADE OR CALLING: Acquisitions Manager

TAKE NOTICE that the Applicant intends to apply to the Licensing Committee for the said Division to be held at the place and date and time shown above for the provisional grant to him of a justices licence authorising him to sell by retail intoxicating liquor of all descriptions for consumption on or off the above premises.

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Fighting the flood by hand

Continued from page 1

among ordinary Chinese. Mr Nalet explained: "It is very difficult for most Chinese to be able to make a judgement on propaganda that goes with feelings and sentiment. When it is politics and economics, they are used to it. When it is people suffering, they have difficulty realising this can also be used for propaganda means." Typical is Ms Liu, 24, in the grocery shop: "The soldiers perform brilliantly. The leaders are good, and the soldiers are better."

As with all propaganda, there is of course a sub-text. The PLA's image is still tarnished by the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, and this summer the military has been publicly blamed by President Jiang Zemin for rampant smuggling, and ordered to dismantle its huge business empire. So what better way to re-establish the army's tradi-

tional lustre? Li Ruihuan, a senior Politburo leader, visited Jiutiang city, where soldiers had repaired the ruptured Yangtze dike. "This great deed proved again that the army is great and the army is the people's army," he proclaimed.

The media has been full of soldier heroes. Xie Feng, in Gonggan County, Hubei, had rescued 1,200 flooded-out people by boat but - as he told the cameras - rejected his own father's plea to help retrieve the family's belongings from their submerged house. "I cannot do that," soldier Xie told his father. "The army has discipline, and we have another mission to rescue people. You had better do it by yourself." All this could be to the PLA's advantage. "I think the army is also using this as a bargaining chip for their compensation for getting out of business. The army has in fact done a great job," said Mr Nalet.

It is doing the job by hand. In Jiutiang, soldiers strained to heave enormous boulders into the river. In Harbin, they were shown furiously scooping water back into the river using plastic washing-up bowls. Is it possible that the country building the Three Gorges Dam has no water pumps? Said Ms Dai: "We feel shame because now, almost in the 21st century, the soldiers still use 2,000-year-old methods against the floods."

Ms Dai has written three articles for non-mainland magazines this summer, on the environmental damage in China that has exacerbated the situation. "But I have no chance to publish it inside China," she said. Last weekend, the government finally issued an edict that all logging should stop in the upper reaches of the Yangtze. But in the media there can be no debate about why it has taken so many years to ac-

knowledge the human contribution to the annual floods. Only now are water conservancy officials publicly stating that they must do something to stop farmers draining the lakes and encroaching on the natural flood basins. In Hubei, the number of lakes fell from 1,066 in the Fifties to 325 today, according to Chinese figures.

Yet beyond the shortcomings of the propaganda, there is genuine fellow-feeling for the victims and the soldiers. A television charity gala last weekend prompted an avalanche of pledges, and total donations to the central government have now reached 1.76 billion yuan (£136m). One Feking woman said: "I am a laid-off worker, but I'm in better condition than the flood victims. I donated 50 yuan (\$4) through my street committee. Whoever saw the scenes of flooded people would offer help."

Drinking in the last chance saloon

The media attacks on the media which followed Diana's death forced some restraint, but is it really now business as usual?



Two institutions suffered opprobrium after the death in Paris of Diana, Princess of Wales: the Royal Family and the media. The media, representing, as they would have it, "the people", accused the Queen of insensitivity both to the dead princess and her subjects by failing to grieve in public and to break with protocol by flying the flag at half-mast over Buckingham Palace when she was elsewhere.

Earl Spencer, Diana's brother, representing, as he would have it, the princess herself, accused the media, particularly the tabloid newspapers, of murdering the princess. He completed the opprobrium circle with a less than subtle attack on the Royal Family as well.

A year on, the Queen, counselled by her prime minister and others, has embarked on the creation of a less remote monarchy, and is flying the flag at half-mast to mark next Monday's anniversary. Prince Charles has worked hard on his public image, particularly over his relationship with his sons. The press have dutifully and positively reported this, and have helped to increase his popularity. But what of their own?

Let us remind ourselves of Earl Spencer's words in Westminster Abbey: "I always believed the press would kill her," said her brother. "It would appear that every proprietor and editor of every publication that has paid for intrusive and exploitative photographs of her, encouraging greedy and ruthless individuals to risk everything in pursuit of Diana's image, has blood on their hands today."

There can never have been so savage an assault on the press. There was no mileage in drawing attention to Charles Spencer's own association with the media, to his own sale of pictures of the grand home his inheritance had brought him, to his own marital problems, to the dysfunctionality of his own family. On that day, in that climate of grief, the people accepted the words of the brother of the people's

princess. If the monarchy had a job of rehabilitation to do, the media's was much greater. That applied particularly to the press, and especially to the tabloid press.

And today? *The People's Pictures*. Remembering Diana. Diana's Last Month. One Year On. Diana: The Mourning After. Diana's Children. Just a tiny taste of titles, billing articles by the dozen, programmes by the score, during the days leading up to The Anniversary next Monday. In terms of volume, certainly nothing has changed. It flows over us, interesting only in that it extends the boundaries as never before in the search for yet another "angle" on a single event.

The only thing which made me pause for a second occurred in one of those inevitable "What were you doing on the day Diana died?" features. John Humphrys, *Radio 4* Today presenter, had the courage/foolishness to say, "I am not the slightest bit interested in remembering where I was. It was not, as far as I am concerned, a seminal event."

Diana - the face, the story, the myth, the icon - sells; hence the present avalanche of words and pictures. When the *Daily Mail* ran a glossy part-work biography of the princess it increased sales by around 400,000. The series ran for 12 weeks and was so successful the *Mail* quickly put together another equally successful part-work, on Diana and fashion.

So the evidence for demand is there. The biographies, by two unlikely authors, Julie Burchill and Bea Campbell, were serialised in broadsheets. *The Times* serialised a book exploring the conspiracy theories surrounding the car crash. The present cascade of memorial offerings occupies as much space in the broadsheets as the tabloids. Upmarket, downmarket, glossy magazines, tacky magazines, mass audience television, minority television - every market is involved, everybody is to blame. To blame for what?

For "pandering" (emotive word) to public prurience? For responding (non-em-

otive word) to public interest? The media are always susceptible to charges of hypocrisy, with some justification. It is less acceptable to accuse consumers of the same, still less to accuse, posthumously, Diana herself. But in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy the public, who in one guise were allegedly excoriating the press, in another were buying newspapers in exceptional numbers, including the tabloids. They could not get enough special supplements and features. This was as true in the regional press as it was for national newspapers. Whether the demand for Diana material is as great one year on remains to be seen when newspaper sales and broadcast audience figures for this period emerge. I doubt it.

grief completely escapes me," wrote the iconoclastic Richard Littlejohn in the *Daily Mail* during the week of national grief. "There have been times this week when I have felt like a visiting alien." He was not alone, but few others dared say it.

As a year has passed one or two more have raised their heads, some to suggest that the press helped to create the national hysteria, that by reporting and showing the thousands flocking to London to lay their wreaths and sign the book of condolence they encouraged many more to do the same. I remember it rather differently. Conversations with editors at the time indicated that the media too were surprised by the scale of national grief and were working to keep up. For once, I think, the pub-

lic might have been mindful of legislating in haste, but he clearly took the view that it would have been criminal not to exploit such a mood of editorial repentance. Less than three weeks after the death, editors agreed at a PCC meeting with Wakeham to end "deplorable practices", and within another few weeks the Code of Practice was strengthened. The concept of "persistent pursuit" was introduced, largely to deal with the paparazzi. The harassment clause in the PCC Code now states: "Journalists and photographers must neither obtain nor seek to obtain information or pictures through intimidation, harassment or persistent pursuit."

Lord Wakeham is content that much has been achieved in the area of self-regulation in the year following Diana's death, and sees it as "an abiding tribute to the memory of the princess".

So are we reading different tabloids, cautious in their coverage of all things royal, reticent about publishing "intimate" (a warm word much preferred by tabloid editors to the word intrusive) photographs? Phil Hall, editor of the *News of the World*, wrote recently in the *Guardian* about being offered two photographs of Prince William. One showed the future king with his arms round a pretty girl, the other, taken by the same member of the public (no paparazzi involvement) at much the same time, showed Prince Harry absailing without safety line or protective helmet. Hall's explanation about why he published the latter but not the former could have come from the mouth of Lord Wakeham: "The decision on which was publishable and which was not was simple. The princess are and should be allowed to grow up without their every movement being recorded. Prince Harry's life was clearly being put at risk by adults who should have known better and it was legitimate for a newspaper to expose those mistakes in the public interest."

That represents change. And paparazzi royal pictures are no longer being bought.

But before we get too carried away about the tabloid taste revolution one or two stories over the year to note: Stake-out of Highgrove to catch Camilla Parker-Bowles's arrival for Charles's early 50th birthday event. Leaking of Camilla's first meeting with William and Harry. Leaking of review planned by young princes for Dad's aforementioned early 50th. Zara Phillips's stud in the tongue shock. And a page of the *Daily Mail* just last week showing Zara embracing a series of men at the Gatcombe Horse Trials.

But by and large more restraint than before, and particularly over the young princes, who are being left alone by the press more than, say, Charles the school-boy was. None of this applies to other tabloid celebrity fodder, but it is arguable whether it should. Paul Gascoigne, Teddy Sheringham, Antea Turner, Kim Wilde have all "suffered" at the hand, and lens, of the tabloid since Diana's death and the new PCC code.

In tackiness terms, television probably has most to answer for. Channel Five's tasteless soap-does about the life of Di, produced by Kelvin MacKenzie and described in this paper as "awe-inspiringly bad, a Grand Canyon of dramatic trash". The same channel's *Diana Years* with pop soundtrack identifying each year in question. ITV's conspiratorial and journalistically suspect examination of the night Diana died, with unlimited access provided by Mohammed Al Fayed for reporter Nicholas Owen to film in Dodi's flat and Edward and Mrs Simpson's mansion. But it is hardly surprising that a medium currently obsessed with the sexiness of its news-readers has distorted values when it comes to remembering Diana.

And happily for the media for it was for once out-lacked by last weekend's "walk the funeral procession route" event, in which a discriminating public voted with its feet, not by walking but by staying away. Peter Cole is professor of journalism at the University of Central Lancashire.

AFTER DIANA

THE MEDIA BY PETER COLE

Diana herself, on whose behalf her brother attacked the media, and who undoubtedly did suffer from the excesses of press intrusion, was adept at press manipulation, ensuring their presence when she wanted publicity for one of her good causes, wanted a point put across in her enduring feud with the Royal Family, or simply wanted to upstage Charles. Richard Kay of the *Daily Mail* and Andrew Morton of the (famously accurate) biography of the princess both profited from special relationships of Diana's making.

The hours and days after Diana's death, particularly the period between the tragedy and the funeral, left little space for reason or detachment. It was a brave person, and certainly a brave newspaper or broadcast editor, who declined to go with the flow of tears. To express surprise or incomprehension at the seemingly spontaneous national anguish was off-limits.

To be honest, the concept of vicarious

acted and the media reacted. Such was the surreal mood that nobody was immune from over-reaction and haste of reaction. Cynicism, rightly and understandably, was on hold, but silence, which might have been sensible, did not occur even to those in the firing line. A procession of editors rushed to react in a chorus of *mea culpa*. Max Hastings, editor of the (London) *Evening Standard*, indulged in only slightly more hyperbole than his fellow editors when he said: "Some members of the newspaper trade have behaved like animals and it is strongly in the public interest that they should be deterred from doing so." Tabloids vowed never to deal with paparazzi again, never to intrude on the privacy of the princess William and Harry, to listen to the message the public was sending them.

Lord Wakeham, chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, seized the hour and the mood. As an experienced politician

She made people aware of the conspiracy

'Poor darling. You can't fight the establishment, but she just dared to speak out'

Jibby Beane, artist
I didn't know Diana, but I went to her brother's wedding. The poor darling was a victim of the establishment. I feel that she realised shortly after her marriage that she was there just to have babies. You can't fight the establishment, but she was a very strong character. The way she fought back made the public more aware of her situation.

I think this continual mourning is too much now, but Diana certainly made people really aware of the conspiracy that went on.

I think she was a compassionate young girl, and I think she's just highlighted a lot of the ugliness around her. Then there was that dreadful hypocrisy by the monarchy and the Church at the funeral, and she created public awareness of it.
Her effect on people is that they



Jibby Beane: Her effect on people is that they have wised up

have wised up. She just dared to speak. She wasn't going to be put down and why should she? She was trapped. It was tragic and awful.

Bob Houston, Editor, *'Royalty'* magazine
There was an overwhelming reaction to Diana's death and it was totally unpredictable and unexpected. It was across all classes and international. Many people will look back and be very surprised at how they reacted last year.

Now it's the first anniversary, people will commemorate in their own way. It will be a private occasion and I don't think there will be a great flood of public feeling. I think we changed only in the short term. We were a nation of sentimental idiots for a couple of weeks. What's interesting, though, is that there are no prece-

dents to the Memorial Fund so it will be interesting to see what happens.

Justin Williams, 23, trainee accountant, Edinburgh
I think the British people have had to change. I think Diana's death highlighted the greed in our society. In a way she represented very old-fashioned values: kindness, charity, generosity, modesty. I think there is this terrible need in the Nineties to have a goddess figure. People are sick of machismo and greed and corruption. They want someone who can make everything better. Already there have been reports of people seeing Diana in visions. I remember reading that one woman said that the night after her little boy died, she saw him holding hands with Diana at the bottom of the bed. She's becoming a saint.

Valerie Howarth, chief executive, ChildLine
I met Diana a few times at charity functions. She had that sort of charisma exceptional in some people.

I was absolutely shocked, like everybody was, when she died. It was not long before we had launched our 10th anniversary appeal and she was due to do other things for us. It's a great loss when you don't have anyone like her pressing your cause.

As to whether we are a more caring society, direct donations by individuals have gone down substantially, but corporate donations, where individuals give to their employer, have gone up. I think people pledge money to the Memorial Fund as an emotional response, rather than to the causes. People haven't given enough thought to that.

INTERVIEWS BY CAITE WILLIAMS

IN THE INDEPENDENT THIS WEEK

AFTER DIANA

THE MONARCHY

THE LEGACY



FRIDAY



SATURDAY

Still pulling plenty of punches

Being a performer for 300 years means you have to adapt your act. But not necessarily your character, as John Morrish discovers from a Punch professor

A man ran amok last week in a crowded shopping centre, battering his wife with a stick after she had accused him of neglecting their baby. Then he set about the police officer who came to arrest him.

Meanwhile, shoppers and their children looked on, laughing, as the maniac shrieked, over and over: "That's the way to do it!" It was not Mr Punch's first offence: nor will it be his last. He's been at it for more than 300 years, and this holiday weekend will find him committing similar outrages on beaches and in parks around the country – and sometimes much worse.

Punch & Judy is a broad tradition. Mr Punch has been known to throw his baby out of the window, or into a sausage machine, before killing Judy and then stringing up the hangman who comes to put his adventures to an end. His antagonists have included a clown, a dog, a crocodile, a ghost, Hitler, Mrs Thatcher and the Devil.

Glyn Edwards, known professionally as "Professor Punchinello", is proud to call himself a "Punch anorak". He knows all the options. But the show he put on in Telford's shopping centre last week, helped by his wife Mary on a comedy tricycle, was carefully tailored for tiny children and their anxious parents: lots of knockabout fun, plenty of people hit with Punch's stick, but no one killed.

As one of several hundred Punch "professors" (the title is traditional, and self-awarded) in this country, Edwards makes a living on the border between tradition and popular appeal. "The kids still go for it," he insists. "It's not a heritage activity that they have to have explained to them. They just roll up and laugh their heads off."

While there is a traditional core of episode and characters, the way those elements are used has always been a decision for the individual performer, who might change them from show to show.

"It's an art-form like the blues," says Edwards. "You get your head around the chords and the riffs, then you realise 'I'm in charge' and you start to improvise around the traditional themes. That's what keeps Mr Punch in tune with each generation."

In this vein, he has slyly introduced contemporary references. "I'm going to give you a big smack," says Judy. "A Big Mac?" says Punch, hopefully, as the children roar.

Nonetheless, these have not been easy years for Mr Punch. Assailed by civic busybodies of both the right (for "lowering the tone of the resort") and the left (for "failing to comply with council guidelines on the de-

it is meaningless to modern children.

At the same time, he defends other performers, many of them fellow members of the Punch & Judy College of Professors, who retain more of the traditional violence. "I think of it as closer to *Tom & Jerry*, where they are blown up one minute and back the next. The kids understand the convention: they are little wooden figures."

After all, Edwards points out, Punch's stick is actually a "slapstick", more of a noisy percussion instrument than a weapon. A performer for nearly 40 years, he likes to think of himself as Mr Punch's spin-doctor.

He pops up in this capacity in *Nasty, British and Short*, a documentary on Radio 4 on Saturday, presented by the Spitting Image creator Roger Law, with Harry Enfield impersonating the lunch-backed wooden sociopath.

Edwards considers Mr Punch a "celebrity", but is aware that many find him threatening, even sinister. He recounts Tony Hancock's difficulties during the making of his film *The Punch & Judy Man*, which he came to believe had been cursed by the Punch puppet: for the rest of his life he could not bear to be near one.

In fact, says Edwards, Hancock's trouble was that he couldn't master the voice, something achieved through the swizzle, a mysterious and ancient piece of technology, and many hours of practice. Terrifying, shrill, unreasonable, the voice is the irreducible core of Mr Punch, even more than the violence. "The thing that moves him into a different level is that voice," agrees Edwards. "We know that no human vocal cords could sound like that: he's from somewhere else, another dimension."

All that keeps Punch true to his historic essence, says Edwards, is the scorn of other performers. In America, some per-

formers have done away with the stick, and made a gentler Punch apologise.

But that's going too far for Professor Punchinello. He doesn't mind topical jokes, and new characters, but Punch's nature must not change. And that's really very simple. "He's a national icon," says Edwards. "And he hits people with a stick."

Nasty, British and Short is on Radio 4 on Sunday 29 August at 2.30pm



Edwards has introduced new references. 'I'm going to give you a big smack,' says Judy. 'A Big Mac?' says Punch

picture of violence") he remains unwelcome in several towns. But Mr Punch has always had to adapt. "The Victorians were upset by the ghost and the devil because it offended their religiosity," says Edwards, who runs courses for performers and enthusiasts. "Hitting a woman with a stick, and doing some sort of harm to a baby, those are concerns that our society focuses upon." In his children's shows, he happily tones down those aspects. Mr Punch, he says, is a folk hero who is careful not to upset his people.

In particular Edwards has done away with any realistic violence to the baby. "The days when the Punch puppet would whack it around the side of the playboard (his stage) are probably gone," he says. So, too, has the hanging scene, on the grounds that

End of the road for the rogue minicabs

Love them or hate them, minicabs are often a lifeline back home for late-night revellers, but will new laws make them safer? By Alex Hayes

SOHO – THE 24-hour nerve-centre of London – is buzzing. It's Friday night, and the streets are crammed with tourists, theatre-goers, drinkers and clubbers. For now, the tubes are running, the shows are rolling, the drinks are flowing and spirits are high. Over the course of the next few hours, the fever will cool down and people will head home. For those who can't face the wait for a night bus and can't find a black taxi, the only option is a minicab. Disliked, mistrusted and reviled by many, they are the only way home for most.

The office of Bateman Cars is, in fact, the pavement. People come to the booth window, much as they might approach a parked ice-cream van on a street corner, to place their order. "It works well," says the boss, Francis, perched on his high stool in the booth with a clipboard in his hand. "People come to me, order their taxi and then hang around outside."

It's nearing 11pm, and the first wave of tired theatre-goers will soon arrive. Before the onslaught, I talk to a lone woman waiting on the pavement. "I always use minicabs," says Susie, a local shop owner. "I have no qualms about taking them alone. Once, I was on my own, in a bad part of town, when this car pulled up alongside me. The driver offered me a lift, saying he was a minicab. At first I refused, but, after a bit of persuasion, I got in. The guy drove me to my door, made sure I was safely in the house before he left, and charged me the right fare. That minicab was a life-saver."

Minicabs are often cheap, but not always safe. This year, 29 women have reported attacks by minicab drivers – five of those attacks were rapes, 24 indecent assaults. Legislation, brought in earlier this month to regulate the London minicab industry (which will bring it into line with the rest of the country), was long overdue.

"Minicabs are a joke," protest Christine and Alison, two women waiting for a driver, who are growing increasingly impatient with the delay. "You wait for ages for one to turn up, then they take forever to get you home. Also, you never know how much they're going to charge. When you get in, it's £10 and, by the time you're home, the price has gone up to £15." Catching the edge of our conversation, a young hair-dresser adds: "Most of the minicab drivers are foreign, don't know London, can't drive and barely speak English."

As the Minister for Transport, Glenda



When the clubbing clique get their noses in the bag there's no telling how late things might get, but how safe is the ride home?

Neville Elder

Jackson pointed out after the enactment of The Private Hire (London) Vehicles Bill on 28 July. "The anomaly – that London is the only city in Britain where minicabs are allowed to trade without any form of regulation – has lasted far too long. I hope this [legislation] finally puts an end to the unacceptable dangers and uncertainty that passengers currently have to face when travelling by minicab in London."

According to the Department of Transport, under the new law, all minicab drivers will be checked for criminal records. They will have to prove that they have appropriate knowledge of London, and general

topographical skills. The drivers will need three years' driving experience with a full licence, and will have to be at least 21. They will have to wear a badge showing that they are licensed, and their cars will probably have a visible registration plate on, as well as in, the car.

Drivers caught soliciting will be prosecuted immediately, as will those carrying passengers without an official registration. Minicabs will only be able to transport passengers who have phoned in advance or visited an office. The legislation will ensure that potential passengers are in no doubt as to whether the car they

are about to get into is an official, or a rogue, minicab. For Sir George Young, who nurtured the legislation from its conception, this is a personal triumph. "Black market minicab operators will hopefully be driven out of business. All those minicabs without a licence, MOT, insurance or tax won't survive. At the same time, those who run a legitimate business will gain from helping the authorities rid London of the unlicensed firms."

In his Soho booth, Francis, finding a moment to talk after the post-pub closing-time rush, insists he welcomes the new legislation. "I'm happy. Hopefully, this

will clean up the trade and salvage minicabs' reputation."

A young couple who have spent the evening in the pub, join in. "You read a story about a woman being raped by a minicab driver, and suddenly every minicab should be hounded," says the man. "Well I don't agree. You get good cops and bad cops; you can't just lump them all together."

"That's right," says his girlfriend. "You just have to be sensible. Minicabs are an alternative, cheaper taxi service. If you use them when it suits you, and don't just hop into the first car that comes along, there's no reason why anything should go wrong."

Most of these guys are really hard-working and friendly."

At half-past midnight, the streets are busier than ever. As I watch the crowd traipsing along Old Compton Street, I can't help thinking of Wembley Walk after an international, and all those hordes of fans slowly marching towards the same point.

Two women who work for a London hotel are waiting patiently for their cab to arrive. They are not bothered by the reported 10,000 rogue minicabs roaming the capital. "Let's face it, we're all very grateful for minicabs in general," points out Emma. "If the new Act is going to rid the streets of the minicabs that hassle you outside pubs and clubs, then great. But it shouldn't target firms like this one."

"It may not be a limousine service," interjects her friend, "but it's efficient, friendly, cheap and reliable. If it wasn't for them, you simply wouldn't get home on a Friday and Saturday night."

Part of the recent problems are, undeniably, a direct consequence of the total lack of black cabs in busy areas of London. "In the daytime, you can't get enough black cabs, but at night forget it. They simply aren't around," backs a young London couple – almost in unison – who have been drinking late in Soho House, a drinking club favoured by television people. "And if one does miraculously drive through a crowded neighbourhood," insists the man, "it probably won't stop, or the driver will tell you which way he's heading, which may or may not take him past your house."

The Metropolitan police don't believe there is a need for more black cabs. Their view is that "regulation of the minicab trade is the best way in which to ensure travellers' safety, and we welcome the legislation which aims to do this."

If minicabs were licensed properly and started patrolling the streets during the day, public confidence would grow.

It's almost half-past two, the crowds have ebbed, and the few stumbling pedestrians left in Soho seem to be in no rush to go anywhere in particular. Having survived nearly five hours of Soho madness, I gladly accept Francis's offer of a cab home. "Fulham," he says to one of the drivers poised at the street corner. "Nine pounds, regular client," he barks.

I climbed in the back, knowing I would get home safely.

Mad dons and dreaming spires

A Cambridge fellow reduced an interviewee to tears. But this is mild behaviour.
By Glenda Cooper

Thon art beside thyself much learning doth make thee mad." So the Bible records how the apostle Paul was viewed. But it might be an apposite description of how many people see the dons of Oxford and Cambridge.

The latest eccentric don to hit the headlines is Dr Eric Griffiths, a lecturer in English at Trinity College, Cambridge (Alma Mater to, among others, Newton, Wittgenstein and Tennyson).

Among the students hoping to join the ranks of august alumni was Tracy Playle, whose interview with Dr Griffiths, by her account, was not a happy one. Ms Playle says Dr Griffiths mimicked her Essex accent, sneered at her home town of Harlow and suggested that since she grew up in Essex she might not be aware that some squiggles on the page were in fact Greek. After her nasty experience, Ms Playle has triumphantly announced that she is going to Warwick instead.

Dr Griffiths's image is somewhat controversial within the university. According to one former student, he once allegedly walked into a feminist consciousness-raising meeting and asked if there was anyone present who would sew on a button for him. His successive groups of acolytes and favourites sip gin and tonic from pint mugs in his rooms while the rest of the courtyard's residents enjoy his selection of opera at top volume. This is not the first time he has reduced a student to tears on the grounds of alleged stupidity, but his acerbic manner has many fans. His lectures are by far the best attended in the faculty.

Urban myths abound of the bizarre behaviour of the most learned. One Cambridge graduate recalls tales of a don who used to summon students into his rooms for lessons while he was in the bath. Another remembers the female don who conducted tutorials lying on the floor. "Coming into the room, you'd think 'Where is she?' and then trip over her." A former classics student was most taken by his philosophy don, who walked out of a McDonald's restaurant in a state of bewilderment after one of his children bought a fillet of fish. "He could not understand the concept of a square fish in a box," says the student. "He also admitted that the idea of table football, still a popular pastime at many Oxford colleges, confused him." Some dons



Trinity College, Cambridge: Alma Mater to Newton, Wittgenstein, Tennyson and many academic eccentrics

Jason Bye

turn their eccentric image to their advantage. The same man, on being pulled over for driving his car erratically, angrily told an officer not to interrupt him because he was having an "important philosophical thought".

Professor Alan Ryan Warden of New College, Oxford, recalls the days of outlandish behaviour with affection: "There are not many eccentric dons left," he sighs. "People are more sober, virtuous, respectable and hardworking now. But I also think that they are more careworn and anxious."

He admits "exuberant" dons can put interviewees off. "You ask standard questions to make them think but it doesn't always work. I used to ask candidates about Dean Swift's

pamphlet suggesting that the Irish should eat their own babies. Some people would completely over-react and say 'God says you mustn't' and then other people would get nervous and say 'Oh, the poor thing, think they should?' So far, your good intentions the interview can go wrong."

Professor Ryan remembers his own interview, 40 years ago, was less than conventional. "I was interviewed by six people, one of whom was Lord Balmaghie. He read *The Times* all the way through, holding it in front of his face. Near the end he lowered it and said: 'What did you think of question six?' I answered and he put the paper up and carried on reading."

But while some may find these affectations quaint, others find them

infuriating. "They are not eccentric, they are dysfunctional," says Lisa Jardine, who is professor of Renaissance studies at Queen Mary and Westfield College, London. "I don't think there's room in the modern world for these affectations. It's just bad behaviour."

A former (male) zoology student of EB "Henry" Ford, the distinguished ecological geneticist at Oxford, recalls his tutor's utter inability to deal with women. "When women were allowed into lectures for the first time he walked into one of his lectures where there were only female undergraduates. Seeing this he said 'As no-one has turned up today the lecture is cancelled' and walked out."

"So I shouldn't have been

surprised when a friend of mine and I did a project with him. My friend had very long hair at that point. For six weeks we saw Ford once a week and he only ever talked to me. At the end he mentioned the 'other young lady'. My friend spoke up: 'I'm not a young lady!'"

"You don't find women behaving like this," says Professor Jardine with impatience. "In men it's called eccentricity, in women incompetence. When Muriel Bradbrook used to show up to seminars with one stocking hanging down and her hair all over the place she was called batty. When LC Knight turned up he was an eccentric don."

While the eccentric don is on the way out in most places - according to Professor Jardine they can only

be found at Oxford and Cambridge colleges these days - their image lives on in the irresistible rise of the "telly don". David Starkey - dubbed the rudest man in Britain - is the prime example (sample quote from Starkey: "Doesn't he [the Archdeacon of York] genuinely make you want to vomit? His fatness, his smugness, his absurdity.") Dr Starkey, formerly of the London School of Economics, made his name on programmes such as *The Moral Maze* and presented his own series on Henry VIII, drawing analogies between Catherine Howard and the Duchess of York. He is joined on the podium by others such as Professor Norman Stone, the history don who left Oxford for Turkey last year but was chiefly

known for his adoration of Baroness Thatcher ("Everything good about Britain is due to Lady Thatcher. Everything bad is the fault of Edward Heath"). Before he left Oxford, a notice went up in one junior common room advising the university authorities to "give Professor Stone a brain scan free of charge".

On learning the distress caused to Ms Playle, Dr Griffiths wrote her a letter of apology. Indeed, badly behaved dons are being drilled into line. "They are a dying breed in real life," says Professor Jardine, somewhat relieved. "We all have job descriptions and work as professionals alongside each other." Professor Ryan, with a suggestion of sadness, adds: "We're a little less exuberant now."

I hate this bathroom invasion

What Virginia says

THERE WAS a time when a man would over dream of being in the same room as his wife when she was getting dressed or undressed. I don't if my father ever entered the bathroom when my mother was having a bath, and vice versa. Barbara Cartland claims she never allowed a man - any man - to see her without her make-up on.

Even now, although I am happy to be visited in my bath by a man I am close to, my son would never come into the bathroom when I was bathing, nor would I go into the bathroom when he was taking a shower. Going into a bathroom where a girl-friend is bathing gives me the creeps. I think it is something about the nipples. It is fascinating to look at our own inhibitions, many of which we take so much for granted that we are hardly aware of them, though they are extremely strong.

However, there is one code that I would have thought does not change a lot. Going to the loo. I could hack a man I knew well having a pee in front of me, though I would probably prefer it if he turned his back. But having a crap? Never!

Although dogs are quite prepared to poo whenever they feel like it, even the more sophisticated cat appears exceptionally embarrassed if you catch him squatting in the garden. His ears go back, dignity invades every hair on his body, and he usually gives you a baleful look as he neatly covers over his traces. "Excuse me," he seems to be saying.

What is Kitty's boyfriend up to that every time she has a bath he seems compelled to go to the loo in front of her? Is he saying, subconsciously, "Take me, take my shit?"

Or is there a hidden agenda, which Kitty obviously feels, of hostility about the whole matter? A woman recently stabbed her husband when he deliberately farted in her face, and, without condoning it, one can understand why. "Shit!" is a word we use when annoyed; describing an object as "crap" is a term of abuse. When neighbours are at war and shove excrement through each other's letterboxes, it is not a friendly "Let's have-a-coffee-together" move. It is full of hatred and venom.

So I can understand why Kitty feels abused when her boyfriend behaves as he does. But what can she do about it? Were she to object, he would doubtless argue that she was refusing to accept him, warts and all. Her answer should be that although we all have unacceptable sides to our natures, we do our best to protect our lovers from them. No, she does not like it. She does not like the smell. She does not like anything about it. Nor, she could add, would she like it if he picked his nose in front of her and ate the contents.

Of course, she gets round it all by never having a bath in his place again, but it seems to me that unless he is prepared to listen to her and in future oot pop in for a crap, there is something wrong with the relationship, and this is what Kitty is spotting. Which is partly why she finds it all so particularly offensive.

I do not think she is hung up at all. I think that, in a subtle way, she is being abused. And if, in fact, she is not and he is just an uninhibited dog-like chap, he would appreciate her disgust, when she pointed it out to him, however unreasonable he felt it was, and desist from doing it.

DILEMMAS



VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

Kitty sometimes visits her boyfriend and has a bath in his flat.

There is no lock on the door and he always comes in and goes to the lavatory - and not just peeing.

She finds this repulsive, but her friends say she is hung up about it. Is she?

What readers say

Get him under control
Kitty's boyfriend sounds revolting! He is either this insensitive because he grew up in a large family with no privacy, or else he is simply too bashful to say what he really wants: to get into her bath.

Kitty must bear in mind that all men are, to some degree, repulsive (just think of the jokes they laugh at) and, like the majority of women in long-term relationships, she must develop subtle techniques for controlling behaviour that is unacceptable to her. What her friends may think is irrelevant.

CLARE Pontypool

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em
Kitty's boyfriend should learn some manners. I suggest that she tells him to stop his dumping antics or he'll get dumped. Failing this I think that she should go out with the girls, have 10 pints of Guinness and a large vegetable Madras, and give him a taste of his own medicine the next day.
GEOFFREY MORGAN
Malvern, Worcestershire

Marking territory
Is Kitty's boyfriend marking his territory so that she does not entertain thoughts of moving in on a permanent basis? Or does he come from a family where this behaviour is accepted, whereas Kitty obviously does not? She could try asking him whether he wants to use the lavatory before she has a bath, as she would like to take this opportunity to relax.

ANON
Time & Wear

Lock yourself in
Invest in a travel lock, available from any camping store. These clever little devices are designed to give the traveller protection from dubious foreign types in shady pensions with lockless doors and should suit your purpose admirably. They will fit any door that opens inwards, can be carried in your pocket, and cost less than £5.
J FALLOWS
Tussock
Liverpool

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Dear Virginia,
I have my A-level results and a place at university. My problem is that I want a year off to travel, but my parents are insisting I take up the place right away. They say things such as "Strike while the iron is hot" and say I can go when I've finished. They are education-mad. What should I do?
Geri

Letters are welcome, and everyone who has a suggestion quoted will be sent a bouquet from *InsideDona*. Send comments and dilemmas to Virginia Ironside, Features Department, *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, fax 0171-293 2182, or e-mail: dilemmas@independent.co.uk - giving your postal address.

POETIC LICENCE

SPERM WAIL
BY MARTIN NEWELL

A worldwide study of the male sperm count has been launched. Recent research indicates that global sperm counts have halved in the past 50 years



At seminars in Europe
On propagative fluid,
A group of spermatologists
agreed
That lower grades of semen
And shortages of He-men
May indicate the race is going to
seed.

The boffins found the problem
With trying to ascertain
That Aphrodite's Evostik is
weaker
Was very hard to surmount
When measuring a sperm count
Until they used a calibrated
beaker.
How might a tighter trouser
Impair the way we are?
How virile were Nureyev or
Nijinsky?
Could presidents of nations
Be worth investigations
Or should we pester Monica
Lewinsky?
A plethora of reasons

Was given for our plight
Including lack of fitness and
pollution
The doctors say we might
Soak tackle in iced water
Which may provide us with a
new solution

So will a growth in umber
Of fellows firing blanks
Mean premiums on population
paste?
An armed guard on the sperm
bank
Or smart card based on seed-
rank
May go beyond the bounds of
decent taste
But if our nasty habits
Cause waves of sterile fluid
What happens if we can't turn
back the tide?
The frantic life we're leading
May well affect our seeding
And this ain't rock and roll, it's
spermicide

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL '98

Don't mention the d-word

Death, racism... paedophilia? Do right-on Nineties audiences really want to hear jokes about *that* sort of topic? Judging by the success of those comedians who've gone for the jugular, they probably do. By Alex Hayes

Taboo or not taboo. That was the question for many comedians at this year's festival. With so many acts on offer to the supposedly politically correct audience of the Nineties, performers must have found it more difficult than ever to write their shows.

Edinburgh may be an open forum for art, but visitors want to be amused, touched and provoked. "I'm not interested in seeing somebody being rude for the sake of being rude," says a fan of comedy in the Pleasance courtyard. And here lies the satirist's dilemma: do I tackle a sensitive issue? And if so, how do I make it accessible and acceptable to the audience without losing that all-important edge?

Needless to say that few have chosen this route, instead following the less risky path of "mainstream" comedy. Some uncompromising performers have, however, accepted the challenge. They have, defiantly, decided to make us face up to very British taboos: racism, homosexuality, death and, most unspeakable, paedophilia.

"There are two ways of dealing with racism," says Junior Simpson, a black comic who mixes a variety of topical issues with the taboo of racism. "You can either pick-up a base-ball bat or a microphone. I think the latter is more effective, and it's less dangerous for me. When I do my show, I like to talk about lots of different things to demonstrate that we all have common experiences. It's not about being black or white, it's about being an individual." But if Simpson's show doesn't solely concentrate on racism, it is a subject which features prominently.

"I wouldn't be honest if I didn't tackle the issue. I mean, if you are going to refer to topical matters, you can't ignore racism. Look at the last few months: the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, for example, was big news; you really felt that there was a moment of pause in London during those three or four days."

The question for Simpson, though, is: do people want to deal with this? "Sure, audiences are nervous about racism. Whenever I mention it, I can feel their sphincters tightening. They think that because I'm black and they're white, I'm automatically blaming them for the problem. But I don't need to tell other black people about racism: that would be like stating the obvious."

Not that Simpson ever forces people to take note. "I just lay out my stall, offering the audience a number of issues from which to choose." For Simpson, fighting racism isn't an obsession, it's more of a personal crusade. "I am as fervent about splitting-up the Spice Girls as I am about ending racism." You feel that the latter will take a hit longer to achieve.

Mike Gunn always wanted to be a funeral director. "The look, the slow pace and the ridiculous hats; they're all slightly sinister and quite scary really." It's little wonder then, that his entire show is based around the taboo of death. "Something like



Tackling the taboos of racism, Junior Simpson, left; and homosexuality, Scott Capurro, right

200,000 people die every year, and nobody talks about it! It's such a typically modern British attitude towards something that's just part of life. Look at the Pharos, they made such a fuss when one of them died. And there's this tribe in Madagascar who cut off one of their fingers; and have wild incestuous sex after a family member dies. While, in Britain, what do we do? Hand-over our loved ones to a complete stranger?"

Death is unquestionably a subject which people choose to ignore. But Gunn believes that most of us are fascinated by death. "After I've made a sick joke about death and a couple are laughing, I'll often ask them whether they knew that their partner found

this kind of stuff funny. Most of the time they had no idea; it's not a subject they'd ever discussed."

Has comedy lightened the burden of the taboo then? "I think comedy is much funnier when you're not meant to laugh. It's like being in assembly at school: you know you shouldn't laugh, but you can't help yourself. By joking about death, I'm getting the taboo out into the open and helping people deal with it."

Already Gunn has had offers to do his stand-up routine at a funeral and at an undertaker's Christmas party. "I turned the first job down because there's no sense in two people being buried on the same day. But the second offer is appealing."



Geraint Lewis

"I chose to do a show about a gay man because I wanted to push buttons and challenge people's perceptions," says Scott Capurro. "The vast majority of the population have such double standards; their attitudes towards gay men are totally one dimensional. They think that gay men are simply nice and friendly - a bit like teenage girls. But the truth is that gay men are, first and foremost, men: they can be racist, bigoted, competitive and nasty just like straight men."

For Capurro then, the essence of his show is to challenge their preconceived ideas about homosexuality: "I don't think that the average person on the street sees homosex-

uality as a taboo anymore. But, the straight-white-males are creating and compounding the problem by limiting people's exposure to the subject."

Certainly this year's festival has few gay comics and, even more startlingly, less than four per cent are women. The result is that performers like Capurro are standing out, and his material is shocking people. "To start off with, the audience is often quite taken aback, but then they laugh at a few jokes and slowly come round." So is his audience now ready to ditch the homosexual taboo? "I doubt it," says Capurro. "What usually happens, when the curtain comes down, is that individual audience members accept homosexuality and the taboo is temporarily lifted. But once they're outside, they collectively revert to their previous position and the taboo is back in place."

Racism, death and homosexuality are issues which we prefer to avoid: paedophilia even more so. Marc Haynes, the 22-year-old winner of the Telegraph's Open Mic Awards at the festival, discusses it in his act. Why? "It challenges people's perceptions." For him, tackling taboos is a duty, not a gambit for an easy laugh. "The comic must hold a mirror up to society," he adds. "If he isn't tackling taboo subjects, then he's just like any other man in the street."

In challenging their audiences to face up to taboos, the Edinburgh comics have shown courage. Some have even been surprised at the response: "I was worried that people wouldn't want to hear any criticism of Diana and her funeral," says David Benson. "The nation's response to her death appeared to be so powerful, that questioning any of last September's events might seem inappropriate." But Benson has found that most of the emotional outpour was due to boredom and the British need for large, Live Aid-style, events. "Most people can't believe how they reacted to her death. I think a lot of us were just slightly embarrassed about our behaviour. It was as if the nation suddenly realised what it had done at the office Christmas party."

As far as Benson is concerned then, Diana's death is no longer a taboo and the "madness" of last September warrants open discussion. "Most people are telling me to take the show further now," says Benson. Maybe we like our taboo-talk after all.

FESTIVAL DIARY



PERRIER NOMINEE
ED BYRNE

IF IT RULED Edinburgh years ago things would be very different now. For a start, Edinburgh wouldn't be where it is. I'd have had it built on terrain more suitable for a large metropolitan centre. I don't know whose idea it was to build the city on hills, but if I'd been in charge he would have been fired. It's no wonder the Scots are so well known for their architects and engineers - they build their cities in the most inaccessible places on earth.

I'm not boasting, but when they built Dublin they obviously thought, "Here's a nice flat bit by the river; let's build a city here." I think that I could have shown similar vision had I been around at Edinburgh's conception. "Gentlemen," I would have said. "Put down your tools. Stop building here. The steps budget is spiralling out of control: this is madness. I have heard tell of a city to the west called Glasgow. They may think it's all very well to walk in one side of a building, go up three flights of stairs and then walk out the other side, but we are Edinburgh folk and will not behave in such a vulgar manner. Come, follow me to a region I call Cumberland. We shall recommence construction there."

Unfortunately, it's too late now. But if I ruled Edinburgh today the first thing I would do is put in some stair lifts for the old people and the drunks. I would also pass an edict that all city maps must include contour lines. That way people can judge just how gruelling the walk from the Assembly Rooms to The Pleasance can be.

I would pass many laws that would directly affect the Fringe. First of all, for the duration of the Fringe I would make fly-posting illegal. What do you mean, it already is? Well in that case, legalising it would take away some of its appeal.

Any person found juggling in public would have their hands removed, except for the really good ones who would have the hands of the bad jugglers grafted on to their elbows, giving them the opportunity to perfect hitherto impossible tricks. Furthermore, any street performer caught saying "Do you want to see me do it?" too often will be put to death. It's the only way they'll learn.

The only thing I wouldn't change is the licensing hours. They're fine the way they are.

PERRIER AWARD NOMINEES

Peter Kay, Tommy Ternan, Al Murray, Sean Cullen and Ed Byrne have been nominated for this year's top comedy prize. In tomorrow's Edinburgh '98 page, James Rampton, a judge on last year's Award panel, talks about the politics of the Perrier and assesses this year's hopefuls. The winner will be announced in Edinburgh at midnight on Saturday.

TICKET OFFERS

Take today's Independent to one of the venues below:

The Pleasance (venue 33)

Five free pairs of tickets for the first five people at the box office. 2.30pm-4pm: The Trestle Theatre Company's Beggar's Belief. One dark and stormy night, two blind men appear pulling a large cart. Seeking food and shelter at an inn, they perform a puppet show in return for their keep.

The Observer Assembly (venue 3)

Two tickets for the price of one to see John Hegley. 8.10-8.10pm: More comedy, poetry and potato sculptures from the festival favourite.

Stands up to criticism

THE EDINBURGH Comedy Festival this year has been full of pontificators predicting the death of straight stand-up. But in Peter Kay's case, it is very much alive and kicking; in fact, it's in the rudest of health. He is so overflowing with energy, he chuckles gratuitous imperiousness of Paul Newman in *Slap Shot* into the middle of a joke about wedding photographers. And now he's got a Perrier nomination to prove it.

At his wedding photographers. And taxi-drivers, bad DJs, *Bullseye*, *Crimestoppers*, *Top Gun*, and *Jm7*. For it. Kay is hardly breaking new ground. I mean, how many times have you seen a routine about the unreliability of minicabs or the em-

COMEDY

PETER KAY
PLEASANCE

barrassing way your mum dances at wedding receptions?

But Kay gets away with this hackneyed choice of material by the sheer verve with which he performs it. He simply burles his guest into an impression of a guest on Jerry Springer. "I've got a secret, and that's why I decided to tell you on national TV I'm not what you think I am - I'm a man." Proving that he is just as lively when he veers away from his script, he has a whale of a time when a mobile phone goes off. Grabbing the device, he immed-

ately rings the caller back and gets her involved in his ongoing gag about why mums always buy crap cola. Bidding her farewell, he adds cheekily: "I'll give you three rings when I get home."

He closes with a vivacious medley of incomprehensible lyrics from famous pop songs. Just why is it that when David Bowie sings "Let's Dance" it always sounds like "Les Dennis"? And do Sister Sledge really sing "Just let me staple the vicar" rather than "Just let me staple for the record" in "We Are Family"?

Never mind the material, feel the exuberance. *Continues until Monday (box office 0131-556 6350)*

JAMES RAMPTON

Shylock through the ages

THEATRE

SHYLOCK
ASSEMBLY ROOMS

THE REHABILITATION of the most famous Jew in theatre, from a book-nosed caricature of greed and resentment to a justifiably bitter and persecuted ethnic minority, didn't just come about with the development of literature's conscience. That's the way we'd like to think that Shylock has been reconsidered since his debut nearly 400 years ago, but as Gareth Armstrong's irresistible dramatic monologue points out, the inception of Shylock (Shylock is an anglicisation, we discover) as a stage character and his passage through literary history inevitably reflect the changing fortunes of the Jews.

It's a witty, if poignant, pun on the consistently marginal status of Jewish culture that the monologue is

delivered by Tubal, Shylock's only and off-forgotten ally in *The Merchant of Venice*, and indeed the only other Jewish character in Shakespeare. Given centre stage, the hit-part Tubal is invested with tremendous comic energy by Armstrong (a regular on BBC radio drama). In fact, as he ruminates through the history of the play (the 18th-century Irish actor, Charlie Macklin's Shylock was for 40 years a phenomenon of the English stage) Tubal makes into a virtue William Pryne's puritanical comment along the lines that Jews were

like actors in their ability to dissemble their faith.

Armstrong balances Tubal's comic asides with contextual nuggets that enrich your understanding of Shylock and his cultural importance as a measure of anti-Semitism. For instance, Shakespeare, officially at least, would not have known any Jews, the community having been expelled from England in 1190.

Armstrong's tour de force is bursting with footnotes like these. By the time he concludes his enactment of the key scenes in *The Merchant*, Shylock's most famous demand seems like a piffling request.

Until 5 September (0131-226 2428)

MIKE HIGGINS

DAY PLANNER

YOUR HOUR-BY-HOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S BEST AT THE FESTIVAL AND FRINGE

11 AM

THEATRE

11.30-12.15 *Play Wisty for Me: The Life of Peter Cook*. Few people could speak with the voice of El. Wisty as surely as Matthew Perret in this two-man show about Cook's life and work. The work never outstays its welcome and individual gags are hilarious. *Pleasance Below, To 31 Aug, £5-£6 (£4-£5)*

12 NOON

THEATRE

12.30-2.00 Richard III. Malachai Bogdanov's toddler version of the dark Shakespeare play may rob some of the leading characters of their full range, but the cast achieve the fusion of kindergarten and courtly intrigue with aplomb. *Pleasance, today and tomorrow, £5 (££)*

4 PM

COMEDY

4.10-5.10 *Back to Stand Up*. Front to Verse - John Dowie. One of the finest comedians of the decade returns as a comic poet. *Pleasance Comedy, To 31 Aug, £5 (££)*

THEATRE

4.35-5.35 *Tamagotchi Heaven*. Adults-only tragicomic tale of a woman and her cyberpet. *Pleasance, To 31 Aug, £5.50 (£5.50)*

COMEDY

4.50-5.50 *Peepolykus - Horses for Courses*. Surreal comedy thriller. *Pleasance, To 31 Aug, £7 (£££)*

8 PM

DANCE

8.15-9.30 *Cool Beat, Urban Heat*. One of the most exciting American dance shows of the year. Rapid-fire

jazz plus the power of hip-hop. *Glided Ballroom, To 5 Sept, £3.50 (£3.50)*

THEATRE

8.10-9.20 *A Family Outing*. Stirring three-hander from Mark Whitelaw, combining soap, satire and strip-tease. An "inspired theatrical conceit". *Assembly Rooms, To 5 Sept, £5 (££)*

COMEDY

8.30-9.30 *Rich Hall*. He's back doing his languid American thang, cruising from World Cup woes to nuclear warfare. *Assembly Rooms, To 30 Aug, £9 (££)*

9 PM

COMEDY

9.00-10.00 Jason Byrne. Frenetic and haptic humour from one of this year's finds. The king of off-the-cuff, he takes look-at-me



'Play Wisty for Me', 11.30am

petulance to an art form. His first solo Edinburgh show. *Pleasance, To 31 Aug, £7.50 (£5.50)*

COMEDY

9.25-10.25 Al Murray: the Pub Landlord, Keeper of the Pint Cosmic. Cruelly denied the Perrier Award on two previous occasions, Murray

returns for a third stint behind the bar with his acute observations on just what it means to be male and British. Not to be missed. *Pleasance, To 31 Aug, £3.50 (£7.50)*

COMEDY

9.45-10.45 Junior Simpson. More up-to-the minute material from the popular stand-up who dares to tackle issues such as the fiasco surrounding the Stephen Lawrence trial. *Assembly Rooms, To 30 Aug, £9-£10 (£8-£9)*

10 PM

COMEDY

10.15-11.15 *The League Against Tedium*. Simon Munnery's megalomaniacal creation - an antidote to middle-of-the-road comedy blues. Cruelly denied even a nomination for the Perrier Award. *Pleasance Above, To 31 Aug, £8-£9 (£7-£8)*



'A Family Outing', 8.10pm

3 pm

COMEDY

3.00-4.00 Teatime Chat with Richard Whiteley. The *Countdown* king, plus guests. In all, it proves to be an eminently satisfying hour, in a fusty sort of a way. *Pleasance, To 31 Aug, £7 (££)*

JP 11/10/50



FILM

Welcome to the family, son

THE BIG PICTURE



RYAN GILBEY

LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS (18)
DIRECTOR: GUY RITCHIE
107 MINS

STARRING NICK MORAN, JASON FLEMING, DEXTER FLETCHER

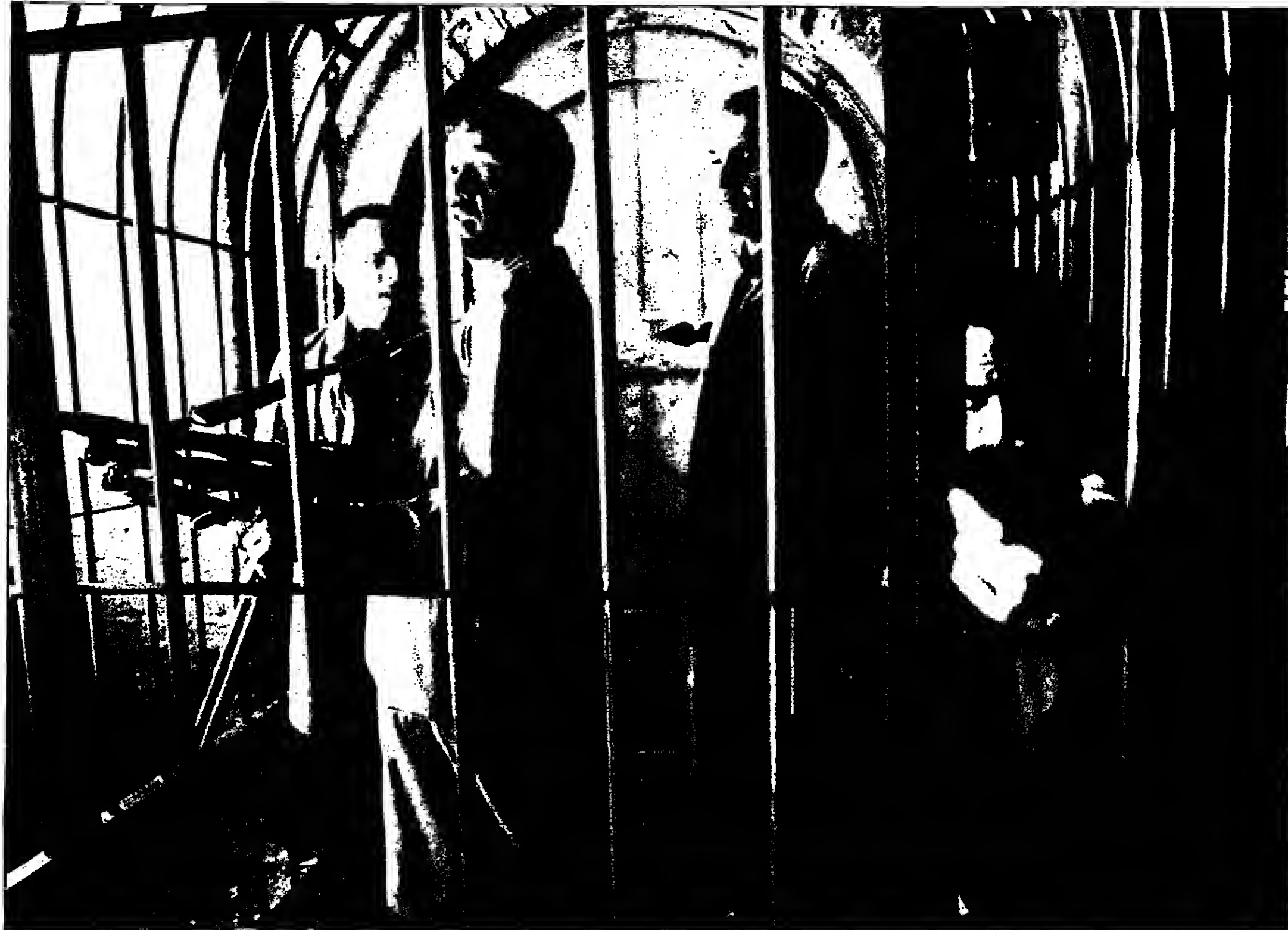
A ny film-maker who hires Vinny Jones to play the sole embodiment of morality must surely be either misguided or depraved. The 29-year-old British writer-director Guy Ritchie is actually neither. His first feature, *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, is anything to go by, he is a firm traditionalist. The picture is loud and jazzy, and relies on that very modern, very flippant technique of using violence as the punchline to a joke, or a joke as the full-stop after an act of violence. Under this scab-hard surface hides a tender skin; the conflict between the two textures, the friction between form and content, is what gives the film its occasional dynamic moments.

Despite possessing perhaps the worst title in the history of cinema, *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* is a creditable attempt at rescuing a home-grown product from American influence. The British crime movie has a distinguished history, but from recent genre efforts like *Dad Savage* and *Hard Men*, you would think that gangsters in cinema didn't exist BT - Before Tarantino.

Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels does its fair share of looting, and there are too many shots of men in suits striding down urban streets to convince you that someone on the production team didn't wear out their copy of *Reservoir Dogs* studying its credit sequence.

But most of the sources pillaged or referenced are closer to home. PH Moriarty, whose face has the look of sweaty wax, is cast as a porn baron called Hatchet Harry; the same actor played a hood named Razors in *The Long Good Friday*. Another actor, Jason Fleming, has clearly been made up to resemble James Fox in *Performance*. Most of the close-ups are lit ominously from beneath, so that the cast look like children shining torches under their chin to appear demonic. At other times, Tim Maurice-Jones's unsparing photography makes the human face as coarse and mottled as the Bethnal Green brickwork.

The result of this stylistic confusion is an almost surreal atmosphere of dislocation. The movie is set in London, yet there are no people on the streets, and no police, even following an afternoon of heavy gunfire. The only representative of law, at least until the coda, is a traffic war-



What the film is really interested in is the fabric of male relationships. Its subtext displays a yearning for the security of male bonding

den who is beaten unconscious in a cheap, if effective, bid for audience sympathies. The film's version of East London is further divorced from reality by faded, yellowing filters which bring the images to the point of sepia, a tone favoured by Lars von Trier in *The Element of Crime* and *Breaking the Waves*.

If the colour suggests nostalgia too, that's no accident. The film's plot is driven by a quest for money - a debt of £500,000 owed to Hatchet Harry by the young chancer Eddy (Nick Moran) following a disastrous card game. Predictably, the cash is a McGuffin; what the film is really interested in is the fabric of male relationships. The characters are divided into gangs of professionals and amateurs. Eddy and his pals straddle that divide, while their next-door

neighbours are vicious thugs who are planning to rob another unofficial family of criminals, a trio of public schoolboys who have reinvented themselves as drug dealers.

It is a measure of how little regard Ritchie has for his plot that Eddy learns of this scheme by employing that cunning underworld trick of pressing your ear against a dividing wall. This portrait of volatile factions as families in a soap opera has a parochial charm about it which echoes the Ealing comedies. The writing is nicely nuanced, plugging into the complications of rhyming slang and coded colloquialisms - "Bob's your uncle" unnecessarily but comically extended to "Robert's your father's brother", for instance.

Ritchie can get carried away with his fondness for the criminal

fraternity; the Liverpoolian burglar who refuses to wear a stocking because it might cramp his new perm is an idiosyncrasy too far. And he can be a maddeningly literal-minded writer - the wonderful moment when a burning man comes tearing out of a pub and disappears into the night is perfect as an absurd visual non-sequitur; a flashback which explains the flames sucks the magic out of the conceit.

Ritchie's direction is ostentatiously showy. He slows the film-speed down, cranks it up, and inserts freeze-frames on a whim. For special occasions, he has a deluxe freeze-frame in which all action is halted save for one element - a wisp of blue cigar smoke smaking out of a frozen tableau. These tricks seem calculated to distract you from the

film's sentimental subtext, which displays a yearning for the security of family - any family, so long as it is exclusively male. As well as the little pockets of emotionally retarded men, there are two pairs of real fathers and sons whose relationships are gently contrasted. Eddy's father JD (Sting) is a bar owner with mobster connections. JD isn't very tactile with his son, unless you count the moment when he punches him in the mouth.

Two minor characters, also father and son, form the emotional nucleus of the film. Big Chris (Vinnie Jones) is London's most feared debt collector, a reputation which is unaffected by the presence on his rounds of his young son Little Chris (Peter McNicholl). The relationship between Chises Big and Little pro-

vides the sole touchstone of stability, and the only evidence of love. Significantly, the movie plays every act of brutality for laughs until it comes time for Big Chris to exact revenge on the man who has threatened his son - then the camera fixes on Chris's face, a gnarled mask of fury as he persistently attempts to slam his car door while the offending fellow's head is jammed in it.

As the film would have it, the relationship between a father and a son is the only thing worth defending. This insular perspective is even more jarring than the sight of empty streets. You will be accustomed by now to the reflex homophobia of gangsters, a tendency both indulged and satirised by the film. I suspect that Ritchie made Hatchet Harry a porn king as an excuse to include

shots of his desk littered with marrow-sized rubber phalluses, one of which he uses for the same purpose that Al Capone wielded a baseball bat in *The Untouchables*.

But where are the women? The picture feels unformed without them. There is an elderly matriarch who oversees the card game, and a stoned girl who gets to rise from her stupor and fire a machine gun.

The only time the camera seems overly interested in a female character is during a shot of a studded leather thong clasped between a woman's buttocks. And they say there are no decent roles for women. Surely I can't be the only person wondering what the wives and girlfriends are getting up to while their men are beating each other's brains out with dildos.

ALSO SHOWING

THE HORSE WHISPERER (PG) ROBERT REDFORD ■ THE SPANISH PRISONER (PG) DAVID MAMET

■ THE REAL HOWARD SPITZ (PG) VADIM JEAN ■ MR NICE GUY (15) SAMO HUNG ■ APRIL STORY/FRIED DRAGON FISH (NC) SHUNJI IWAI

THE HORSE WHISPERER is the sort of film in which you know that the characters have arrived at a crossroads, where you can sense that someone's inner turmoil is lifting when the cinematographer's palette of chilly blues and greys is traded in for a harvest of shimmering golds and yellows. Robert Redford has directed this cautious adaptation of Nicholas Evans' novel, and selflessly cast himself as Tom Booker, a saintly Montana farmhand who does a nice sideline in equine psychoanalysis: he's a Mr Ed Shriner.

Sadly, this involves not a really big couch and conversations about foal-hood, but an immense amount of eye contact. Tom simply looks into the horse's eyes for a few months and communicates intuitive but non-bestial tenderness. Annie (Kristen Scott Thomas), a New York magazine editor, visits Tom with her daughter and the girl's horse, both survivors of a traumatic accident. Annie needs girl and horse rejuvenated, but Tom recognises her own spiritual malnutrition and spreads his healing hands a little wider, though if he was that smart he would advise her that putting Paula Yates and Damien Hirst on the cover of your magazine is no way to get your circulation up.

Of course, if Tom were to say a



Redford's rustic idyll is a bland, irony-free territory

thing like that, then the film's myth that rustic folk are spiritually purer than their city-dwelling counterparts would be dispelled. This belief is conveyed entirely without irony. The ranch-hands are cleansed beings from whom all imprint of personality has been removed. The movie isn't much deeper. Emotional wounds are inflicted, then healed; conflicts are resolved against majestic scenery and burning skies which call to mind 1970s Marlboro billboards. The camera's adoration of Redford is exceeded only by its fondness for the accoutrements of country life, you

know where you are with good, honest ropes and harnesses and lassos, as any moderately committed sadomasochist will tell you.

Each time Tom appears on screen, he wears a blurred halo of golden light, and even when he's not there, people keep saying things like "He's a good man" and "He's got a gift." Indeed he has: the gift of complete emptiness. He's the Stepford Cowboy.

In David Mamet's intricate thriller *The Spanish Prisoner*, Joe Ross (Campbell Scott) develops a top-secret formula, referred to as

"The Process". His boss (Ben Gazzara) is demanding his signature to secure loyalty. Meanwhile, an enigmatic new acquaintance (Steve Martin) warns Joe he is about to be swindled. Who should he trust?

If this synopsis seems sparse, that's deliberate. On the one hand, to reveal any more would be to puncture a film which is successful precisely because it is airtight. But the plot's starkness is a key element, mirrored in the minimalist design and direction and in Mamet's trademark dialogue: clipped, severe, yet promising a hundred secrets.

You are never asked to care about Joe's predicament as the certainties of his universe are systematically eradicated. But then this is a playful exercise in twisting plausibility, and expectations, until they seize up; there is a scientific detachment about the way Mamet painstakingly explores every algebraic permutation of a scenario that ping-pongs between the Kafkaesque (shades of *The Trial*) and the Hitchcockian (the tennis motif, and Martin's imposing Robert Walker-style performance, recalling *Strangers on a Train*). While Mamet's paranoid fantasies retain a sinister edge, they have the vitality of new fairy-tales; they are about seeing the world over again, through other eyes.

The British director Vadim Jean has had a chequered career, but the

family comedy *The Real Howard Spitz* finds him at his most assured. Kelsey Grammer (best known as Frasier) plays a failed crime novelist who turns to writing children's books, only to find his hatred of children a slight disadvantage. The film is sharp and sunny, and Grammer's gloriously crumpled persona is utterly charming, even in disguise - dressed as a cow, his udders have a grouchy, despondent sag.

You can usually rely on Jackie Chan movies for a cheap buzz, but *Mr Nice Guy* is a drab addition to the kung-fu clown's CV. The film is the usual tacky mixture of drugs, gangsters and women dressed like Paul's People, but something is missing: fun. Only one sequence hits the spot: a showdown on a construction site, in which wheelbarrows and cement mixers are enlisted in the fight against evil Australian drug barons.

Two new films by the Japanese director Shunji Iwai, and neither of them worthy of your attention: *April Story* is a winsome tale of unrequited love, with Takako Matsu making Bambi eyes as a shy undergraduate; *Fried Dragon Fish* is a (deliberately?) shoddy TV-style cop drama with kitsch embellishments. A slow week at the ICA, then.

All films on general release from tomorrow

RYAN GILBEY

THOMAS SUTCLIFFE

I occasionally dream that Channel 4 still represents the values of rational viewers who want an alternative to audience-chasing pap - but then something on telly wakes me up

TELEVISION REVIEW, PAGE 24

"A funny, bawdy, moving blend of gritty drama, glorious music and dance...SIMULTANEOUSLY STIRRING AND ILLUMINATING"

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هكذا مضى الحال

The savviest kid on the block

Self-taught, street-literate and living in fear of 'Y2K', Chloë Sevigny is the very model of indie film cool. Now, starring in Whit Stillman's 'The Last Days of Disco', Hollywood beckons. Will she just say no? By James Mottram

IF THE controversy-laden *Kids* is to remain emblematic of this decade's Generation Xers, Chloë Sevigny is a perverse reminder of the limitations of director Larry Clark's slice-of-life. A descendant of the 18th century French court gossip the Marquise de Sevigne, the actress who burst on to the screen three years ago in Clark's depiction of wasted youth is hardly heading for oblivion.

Like her on-off boyfriend (and *Kids* screenwriter) Harmony Korine, Sevigny is a self-taught, street-literate product of the Nineties, a symbol of the disparate influences that feed into youth culture. A maelstrom of contradictions, in the same breath she can talk of her love for Alan Clarke and Sissy Spacek, and her fear for the Millennium, or Y2K as she dubs it. The savvy 23-year-old, an ex-model for Prada, is no Heather Graham wannabe, more an anarchic Jean Seberg.

Sevigny is in London to talk about Whit Stillman's *The Last Days of Disco*, a shrewdly scripted and preppie-populated take on the exclusivity of the early Eighties NYC Studio 54 scene. Claiming to have "no interest in playing the leading lady", Sevigny does just this - alongside Britain's own belle du jour Kate Beckinsale. As the naive clubber Alice, it's the role closest so far to revealing the layers beneath the actress.

"Coming from Connecticut, I can understand arriving in the big city and being shellshocked by the whole experience," she admits. "When I first moved to Manhattan I would go to discos every night of the week. I was living in a flat with five other kids who all worked for this 'club-lord' who owned Club USA, the Palladium, the Limestone. I had a lot of connections, so it was easy for me. I knew everyone on the doors. But the clubs just aren't quite as fabulous any more. It's not as big a production as it used to be. I don't think as much money is pumped into the nightly events."

Calling herself the "irresponsible actress", Sevigny admits to doing little research of the milieu for her latest film - set in a time when she was only seven. "I do remember when I was a girl, my father worked for a company where he had this wild secretary who invited him and my mother to a disco. They got all dolled up to go to Studio 54 - and came home with a Polaroid of them with an ape."

Raised in Darien (a town where residents are forbidden to sell their houses to Jews), her early years were far removed from city glitz, spending summers at

theatre camp, with dreams of a part-time Broadway musical career ("ridiculous as it sounds - I don't have a voice") alongside costume design for period films. She moved to New York when she was 18 and garnered the attention of the style press while working as a seamstress at fashion outlet Liquid Sky.

Compared to Audrey Hepburn and Twiggy, Sevigny was putting together a charity-shop chic long before the high street chain stores molested the look. Fashion is now an industry she dislikes fiercely, but pigeon-holing is proving the bane of her life. From fashion guru to teen seductress, Sevigny was last year's Dominique Swain, following an appearance in Steve Buscemi's loser comedy *Trees Lounge*. "The whole Lolita thing after *Trees Lounge* - that I was a sexpot girl - I don't think of me in that way at all. It's so hard to get perspective on it. I'm trying not to work a lot now. I prefer to remain anonymous."

CHLOE'S CLIPS

Kids

The part that made her name, but strange to say, Sevigny's one of the worst things about *Kids*. The rest of the cast tangle with street life - she looks like someone stuck on a conveyor belt in the airport lounge.

Trees Lounge

Sevigny didn't rate this performance but it's by far her best. She plays young suburbanite Debbie, whose loose-limbed, bug-eyed wisdom intrigues and ultimately overwhelms cowardly, insecure Tommy, played by Steve Buscemi. The scene where they almost have sex is superb.

Gummo

Chloe's performance is more of an aesthetic shock than a creative one. Normally as gangly as a foal, she's transformed here into a hulking, white-trash goddess who is given woefully little else to do.

CHARLOTTE O'SULLIVAN

moos. People don't recognise me from one film to the next."

Almost rejected from *Kids* because she was seen as too old, Sevigny is perhaps suffering from this chameleonic approach, missing out on a part in the much-hyped (and *Disco* precursor) *Glam* tribute *Velvet Goldmine*. "I wanted Toni Collette's role, and they said I was too young. So when I see Todd [Haynes, the director] on the street, I give him a hard time."

Sevigny, unafraid to present herself with new challenges, has just finished her first stage experience, the Roh Urmah play *Hazekwood Jr High*, based on circumstances leading up to the trial of four Indiana teenagers who beat up, tortured and burned to death a 12-year-old classmate. It was a chance to overcome her fear of live performance.

"That was the most fun, the most challenging, and the most far from myself I played a really bad girl, a murderer. She was really evil. I became an insomniac because of the part I was performing on stage. It was the first time I brought a character home and had to deal with that." Director Scott Elliott, whom Sevigny credits greatly, will also be shepherding her through the next film role, based on the Jane Hamilton novel *Map of the World*. Alongside Sigourney Weaver and Julianne Moore, Sevigny is back to playing the bitch, as a young mother who manipulates her child into accusing the school nurse of abuse. No stranger to Hollywood, Sevigny even made an appearance in Volker Schlöndorff's dismal neo-noir *Palmtoed*, a spy in the enemy camp it would seem.

"I think the US indie scene has rather turned in on itself. I'd rather go see a bad studio film than a bad independent film, at least it will look good. Indie films can look so drained. The true independents have a vision: they're trying to break new ground, make a new kind of cinema."

Unsure yet whether she will appear in Harmony Korine's follow-up to the radical *Gummo* (in which Sevigny featured kissing a bunny-eared boy in a swimming pool), she may just hit Hollywood again and shake them up. Giggling with her infectious laugh, she adds: "I've met Joel Schumacher, y'know. I've sat on those meetings. I went in and auditioned for *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, if you can believe that."

'The Last Days of Disco' screens tonight at the Edinburgh Festival and is released on September 4.



Chloë Sevigny - 'I'd rather see a bad studio film than a bad independent film'

Rob Hann

DOUBLE BILL

JOHN HILLCOAT, DIRECTOR OF 'TO HAVE AND TO HOLD' ON HIS IDEAL CINEMATIC PAIRING
THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER DIR. CHARLES LAUGHTON (1955) PICKPOCKET DIR. ROBERT BRESSON (1959)

I AM consistently surprised by *The Night of the Hunter*. This was Charles Laughton's first and only venture into directing. It was slammed at the time - I think it was even banned. It's an unusual and terrifying film, and was based on the book of the same name.

Robert Mitchum plays a preacher who is also a serial killer. The struggle between good and evil is centered around children, which gives it a nightmarish feel; a combination of children's fairy tale and adult.

The lighting and design are expressionistic and subjective - a very brave film style. As well as having a lot of emotional impact and working on many levels, it is an allegory of the struggle between good and evil. Most striking is its unflinching depiction of horror, with none of the usual sophisticated, liberal glossing that often happens when treating such subject matter. In terms



'Night of the Hunter'

of its uniqueness, it has been considered as startling as *Citizen Kane*. It is also a tragic film in the sense that Laughton should have been encouraged to do many more films. Its style is a one-off that no one has ever managed to rival.

Pickpocket is probably the antithesis of the Laughton film in terms of being austere, with realism stripped to a minimalist style. It is extremely subtle and restrained; for me this

makes it the most radical of Bresson's films.

Bresson is known for his dark, Catholic films, but remarkably, there is no overt religious imagery. It just deals with the essence of exterior reality. Psychological explanation is avoided. Even the actors are non-professionals to ensure they don't try to self-consciously emot. It is a stripping away of all the devices we are used to, yet it manages to

create an excessive, even sexual tension.

The pickpocket is like a Dostoevsky character, driven by obsession and with a fetishistic side to his thieving. The amazing thing about Bresson's films is that by doing so little and keeping it simple, they have a power no one has ever been able to get near.

Pickpocket shows an austere exterior world through which it magnifies the interior, whereas *The Night of the Hunter* has an interior world already realised in the exterior. In their extremes of style, both have enormous impact on emotional, intellectual and even spiritual levels. It seems that both films could be imitated with a few simple tricks, yet no one has succeeded. Both films are unique; they continue to grow in reputation, and will still be around in another 100 years.

INTERVIEW BY JENNIFER RODGER

RUSHES

WOODY ALLEN has launched a public attack on the *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd, claiming that she has an "agenda" against him. In an interview in *Indie*, a US independent film magazine, Allen claimed that her panning of his film *Deconstructing Harry* was a personal matter. "If the writer goes in not liking you, they can write negatively about you," he says. "She's not a film critic. Why does she go to the movies and see my films? She goes only so she can write something nasty."

MIKE MYERS, star of *Austin Powers: Man of Mystery*, has confirmed that he will play

Shaggy in Warner Bros' big-screen version of the cult cartoon *Scooby Doo*. He is rumoured to have secured \$10m for the role. Myers is also priming himself for the second time as the re-constituted secret agent in *Austin Powers 2: It's Shaggy Time*. Heather Graham, who played Roller Girl in Paul Thomas Anderson's *Boogie Nights*, will replace Liz Hurley as the female lead as Powers' new sidekick, the CIA agent Felicity Shagwell.

HOLLYWOOD'S PENCHANT for special-effects-driven blockbusters shows no signs of abating as New Line Cinema, responsible for the low-budget

turkey *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, ploughs \$130m into an extravagant adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's epic trilogy *Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien's books have proved enduringly popular, selling more than 50 million copies and getting translated into 25 languages. New Line are hoping that their appeal will extend to celluloid. The picture's director, Peter Jackson, says: "Fantasy is the one cinematic genre that's never been done especially well. I want to see if I can pull it off." Filming is scheduled to begin in the summer of 1999.

AFTER KEEPING hysterical teenagers on tenterhooks, the

ubiquitous Leonardo DiCaprio has finally opted out of playing the serial killer in a controversial adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis's novel *American Psycho*. The deal reportedly fell apart because DiCaprio could not commit himself to a start date, following his completion of *The Beach* for Transcending's director, Danny Boyle. Following DiCaprio's departure from the project, Mary Harron, who was originally going to direct the film, is reportedly back at the helm, but there is no word on whether Christian Bale, whom Harron originally wanted for the lead role, will take the part.

FIONA STURGES

THE CHARTS



'X-Files' - the punters are out there in the UK: overseas 'How Stella Got Her Groove Back' proves to be the highest new release

LONDON BOX OFFICE

TITLE	SCREENS	WEEK'S TAKINGS (£)
1 The X-Files	14	159,946
2 Armageddon	13	128,813
3 The Avengers	13	46,177
4 Dr Doittle	9	31,950
5 Lost in Space	9	27,670
6 Eve's Bayou	6	23,388
7 The Daytrippers	6	20,047
8 La Bossa	1	18,391
9 The Big Lebowski	5	15,803
10 Godzilla	5	13,145

US BOX OFFICE

TITLE	SCREENS	WEEK'S TAKINGS (\$)
1 Saving Private Ryan	2,654	13,157,819
2 How Stella	1,395	11,318,919
3 The Avengers	2,466	10,305,957
4 S'ring About Mary	2,203	8,824,832
5 Snake Eyes	2,718	8,638,309
6 Halloween: H20	2,669	8,478,537
7 Ever After	2,058	5,997,773
8 The Parent Trap	2,407	5,665,316
9 The Negotiator	2,032	4,204,152
10 Armageddon	1,786	4,138,566

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EDUCATION

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Who inspects the inspectors?

Monitoring quality in higher education requires consistent standards. By Geoffrey Alderman

Few issues exercise academics as much as the constant monitoring they have become subject to during the 1990s. The Dearing Review set the ball rolling, and earlier this year the new Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) released a glossy consultation document setting out its views on how the Dearing quality agenda could be put into operation.

We now know that well before the deadline set for responding to this consultation document, the QAA had already rethought its strategy. In a confidential paper dated 6 May, the QAA chief executive, John Randall, signalled a comprehensive retreat from the command-and-control regime previewed in the consultation exercise. We are now promised a much lighter touch: institutions will assess their own quality, and the rigour of this process will, quite rightly, be checked periodically by the QAA.

I am sure we have not heard the last of this story, in which several chapters have still to be written. One of these must focus on the extent to which the QAA is itself quality-assured. Dearing was ominously silent on this subject. It is now time to address the issue.

At the moment the major activity of the QAA is to undertake inspections of the quality of educa-

tion on a subject-by-subject basis. Unless an inspection results in a formal verdict of "unsatisfactory", there is no right of appeal against the judgements of the inspection team.

These teams operate under a type of delegated authority and the scores they award need no further ratification. Errors of fact in a draft inspection report will be corrected, but the scores awarded against each aspect of provision inspected will not be altered once they are announced orally at the end of the inspection visit, no matter how many errors of fact and interpretation the inspectors have made.

Nor does the QAA have any machinery in place to give reassurance to the sector, and the public, that its inspectors all inspect to the same standard. The evidence of hundreds of published inspection reports is that they do not.

An instance of bad practice which may be penalised in one institution is glossed over in another. There are, it is true, a few examples of institutions persuading the QAA to agree to a new inspection. But this has only happened after a great deal of behind-the-scenes diplomacy, occasionally supplemented by the threat of legal action.

If public funding were ever to be linked to the outcome of QAA inspections, the ability to appeal against any judgement made by the QAA would become imperative.

Under the revised quality assurance arrangements, it might well be that compliance with the expectations of the QAA would not be mandatory. Even so, a negative statement made by the QAA about an institution could result in a loss of confidence, especially in sensitive overseas markets. An HE provider in this situation, with a large off-shore income at risk, is bound to demand the right of appeal – a right which is, incidentally, permitted by the Further Education Funding Council in respect of its inspectors' reports.

Scarcely less serious is the failure of the QAA to offer itself for inspection. Like any quality assurance body, it should be subject to regular review by outside experts. Under "continuation audit", the QAA is currently asking institutions how, in a corporate sense, they assure academic standards. But how does the QAA assure its own standards? What are its own quality assurance mechanisms?

The QAA cannot continue to behave as if it were a law unto itself. What is needed, as an absolute minimum, is a code of practice for the QAA, giving all stakeholders a right of redress against both maladministration and injustice. This means that its own autonomy must be limited in future.

Professor Alderman is Pro Vice-Chancellor, Middlesex University



Academics have serious worries about the way their performance is being assessed

A-Z OF UNIVERSITIES
TEESSIDE

Age: 68, if you count from the birth of Constantine Technical College; or 28 from the creation of Teesside Poly; or six years as a university.

History: Founded by shipping magnate Joseph Constantine, the original tech was strongly grounded in technical subjects, such as naval architecture and engineering. When it became a poly, it became a leading centre for computer science and mathematics.

Address: Single town-centre campus in Middlesbrough, a truly northern town.

Ambience: The university is emerging from its Portakabin-bound existence into a Campus 2000 redevelopment programme. This has included a state-of-the-art open-learning technology centre and cinema, 600 new residential places, a learning resource centre and a £10 million innovation and virtual reality centre. The library has been done up for £1 million. All of which compensates for the gritty reality of the town's back-to-back houses and silent factories.

Vital statistics: Quintessentially local and vocational university which has grown from 5,000 to 13,500 students in 10 years. Calls itself the "Opportunity University" to stress its accessibility and desire to reach out. More than 35 per cent of full-time students are over-21 on entry. Offers complete range of courses, from HNDs and HNCs through to degrees. Since merger with Durham and Teesside College of Health in 1995, health studies and nursing has become the biggest academic area with

more than 3,000 students. Then comes business and management, followed by computing and maths, science and technology.

Added value: Close ties with local further education colleges through the University of Teesside partnership, some of which teach university courses, especially at HND level, under franchised arrangements.

Easy to get into? Yes. Experience counts as well as qualifications. Popular courses require higher grades, such as physiotherapy, BBD (20 points); visualisation and multimedia, CCD (16 points). Other degrees ask for 12 to 18 points.

Glimmering alumni: Skin, lead singer in indie band Skunk Anansie; Martin Koots, from dance band The Happy Clappers; Guy Laurence, Planet Hollywood's European executive vice president of marketing; Chris Newton, cyclist and silver medalist in the last Commonwealth Games; opera singer Suzanne Clark; Paul Marsden, Labour MP for Shrewsbury and Atcham; David Bove, MEP for Cleveland and Richmond.

Transport links: Direct train links to Birmingham and Manchester; for London, change at Darlington. Good for coaches. Or hop on a plane to Amsterdam.

Who's the boss? Professor Derek Fraser, former Birmingham school teacher, UCLA history professor and deputy principal of what was Sheffield Poly.

Teaching rating: 21 out of 24 for electrical and electronic engineering; 19 for sociology and criminology, and for civil engineering; 17 for chemical engineering and food science. Research: Came 100 out of 101 in the research assessment exercise. Achieved 3a (top grade is 5) in sociology and history.

Financial health: It's in the black.

Nightlife: Union Central, main student bar, has live acts and is cheap. But the Zoo, the university's own nightclub, is bigger and open until 2am.

Cheap to live in? Yes. University accommodation costs £32.72 to £45.30 a week; private rents less.

Buzzphrase: Happy Days (term of approbation).

Next week: Thames Valley.

LUCY HODGES

WORD OF MOUTH

JOHN IZBICKI

Dreams of youth

WHEN BRIAN Swallow, senior psychology lecturer at the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, questioned 244 pupils at a large north of England comprehensive school about their likes and dislikes in life, almost one third picked on relationships.

A 12-year-old wanted to "get married when I'm 22, have kids when I'm 23 and live in a little house in New York". Boys dreamed of being successful at sport and playing for their favourite football team; girls valued their friends and family. One 14-year-old's humble wish was "to get a hamster".

Another said she wanted to "meet Des Lynam for a cup of tea in Leeds". On the flip side, 35 per cent of the sample feared death more than anything. 26 per cent feared school. Family disturbances, such as divorce were among other fears mentioned.

Although 30 per cent said winning the lottery would be the best thing to happen (which I suppose is what most adults wish for), most of them concentrated on family values and relationships. There is hope for us all, yet.

Women at the top
IT OCCURRED to me the other day

when I was listening to Diana Warwick, chief executive of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors that we now have a whole regiment of women at the top.

Take the education unions, for instance. President of the Association of University Teachers is Penny Holloway from the University of Ulster; then there's Moira Carr, also from Belfast, who is the president of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education; and Alison Shepherd, president of Unison, an administrator at Middlesex University.

Then there are the school teachers: president of NASUWT is Margaret Morgan from Ilfracombe Community College, Devon; the Association of Teachers and Lecturers' president for a few more weeks is Hazel Sardon, a geography teacher from Leeds; and the National Union of Teachers also has a woman at the helm: Maureen Skevington, a South Shields deputy head. The Secondary Heads Association's (SHA) incoming president is Judith Mullen, a Cambridgeshire head; and the Professional Association of Teachers not only has a woman in the chair – Ros Griffiths, a Portsmouth primary teacher – but will be the first schoolteachers

union to have a woman general secretary: Kay Driver, the deputy general secretary of SHA. A veritable regiment, indeed.

Never too late

WHEN EVE Kind was 14, she left school to become the family's breadwinner. Later she married and lived happily with her husband until he died shortly after their 55th wedding anniversary. "I was shattered when I was left on my own. I had to do something," she says. So she decided to return to learning. "It gave me a new interest in life."

Now she has been presented with a special award at the regional adult learners' awards ceremony at Sheffield. Kind is studying at the Division of Adult Continuing Education and, at 85 years old, is the oldest student at Sheffield University.

Alan Whitworth, who obtained an MSc in research education from Bradford University in 1970, also has proved that age is no barrier to an active life. After retiring as senior lecturer in chemistry from Chesterfield College of Technology, he picked up his pen and started writing books – on sequence dancing. Today, and six books later, he is among the most prolific authors and publishers in this field. His



latest, *Learning the Essential Sequence Dances*, is available from 42 Newbold Back Lane, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 4HQ, for £2.50.

Good and ready

WHEN RICHARD Slade left Allerton High School in Leeds at 16, he had nothing but three O-levels. So he joined a couple of friends and kept sheep. Today, aged 31, he and his partners have 45 Texels on 30 acres of land. Oh, he also has a first class honours degree in agricultural sciences from the University of Leeds. And at last week's Great Yorkshire Show he not only displayed some of his sheep, but was presented with this year's Yorkshire Agricultural Medal for being the most meritorious graduate. Richard decided to return to education when he was good and ready and took a foundation year at Alredale and Wharfedale College before

going to university. He will continue farming but has signed up for a PhD, researching pig nutrition and the problems involved in weaning piglets.

Saving on shaving

BEARDS ARE becoming popular among vice-chancellors. Professor Derek Fraser at Teesside has a neat full facial, and Colin Bell, who has been senior vice-principal of Edinburgh and has just become vice-chancellor of Bradford, has a neat one. Sir John Hanson, Warden of Green College, Oxford, has grey whiskers covering his chin. Brian Roper at the University of North London sports a black beard that gives him a slight Svengali air – but none can compete with Arthur Lucas, principal of King's College, London University. If advertising folk ever need a new Cap'n Birds Eye, Professor Lucas is your man!

ODDLY ENOUGH



George Washington: advised healthy living Hulton Getty

You'll pick it up: Camden and Islington Health Authority is contributing £60,000 towards workshops that include sessions showing gay men how to tie each other up and how to pick each other up in bars. Its contribution will be part of a total funding package of £285,000 a year from 12 other London health authorities to the project, run by the volunteer organisation, Gay Men Fighting AIDS (GMFA). "We can't preach down to them," said a GMFA spokesman. "They'd never come to learn about HIV if we did not have this session. We do teach them how to pick up other men," he added. "but it's more a confidence-building exercise." According to a health authority spokeswoman, "It runs on a year-by-year basis, but we are not certain what will happen after 1999."

SKIN school: A Swedish teacher who stripped naked in front of her class has won her legal battle for compensation for unfair dismissal. The teacher was sacked a year ago for shedding her clothes in front of a class of adult, unemployed women at Kristinehamn's adult education college. She told Karstad court in central Sweden that she had decided to teach her class naked to help strengthen her pupils' self-confidence. The court ordered her former employer, Varmland County Council, to pay £11,500 in damages.

Washington PC: President Clinton's adulterous ways may not make him the best role model for American college students, but evidently his illustrious predecessor George Washington is. In the hopes of instilling moral character, officials at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, say that they will hand out copies of Washington's "110 Rules of Civility" to all incoming freshmen. Although the 200-year-old tips were written long before the days of frat parties and date rape, President Washington's advice is still relevant. Rule No 90 recommends no scratching, spitting, coughing or nose-blowing at mealtimes. Rule No 51 should encourage freshmen to do laundry: "Wear not your clothes foul, ripped or dusty." Horny college students can take a useful tip from rule No 109: "Let your actions be manful, not sinful." And, finally, there is the very sensible Rule No 99 for the party-hearty freshman: "Drink not too leisurely, nor too hastily, and before and after drinking, wipe your lips."

Porn free: America's leading porn stars have been hailed as champions of human rights by the president of the country's largest civil liberties group. Nadine Strossen, president of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), told porn stars at the World Pornography Conference, sponsored by California State University, that their work defended the fundamental right to freedom of speech. "I want to underscore how extremely essential your efforts are. I want to thank and applaud you for your fight and contribution for First Amendment freedom and to galvanise you to 'keep it up', so to speak." Among topics discussed at the convention were "Spanking Stories: Straight Theories, Bent Practices" and "A Short History of Sex Toys".

NICK FEARN

Time to bring the big school down to size

How to prepare for that crucial first day at the secondary. By Heather Welford

All of a sudden your big 11-year-old looks small again. It may be the new uniform — bought slightly large to allow for growing room. It may be the new, super-size schoolbag. Or maybe you realise he's twigged something more important: he's no longer top dog at his old primary school, but a really very small pup at his brand new secondary. Something like 85 per cent of his 1,000 or 1,500 schoolfellows are going to be bigger and cleverer than him, and a whole lot more sophisticated.

No wonder children, and their parents, regard the changeover from year six to year seven as a daunting prospect, academically and socially. Just how are they going to cope with all the new work, new routines, new people?

"Most pupils settle amazingly quickly," says Peter Downes, former president of the Secondary Heads Association, and co-author of a book for parents of secondary school age children. "Parents sometimes remember their own transition and worry that things will be the same. They aren't. Secondary schools these days are well aware of the potential difficulties and make a lot of effort to overcome them."

Academically, the National Curriculum has resulted in greater continuity, and better liaison with feeder primaries means that the secondary school is more aware of its new pupils' achievements and any gaps in them. Year sevens need to get used to more homework, a foreign language, and a range of different teaching styles with their new subject teachers. But the curriculum itself should follow a natural progression.

Pupils themselves will probably have had the opportunity to see the school and meet their form tutor. Most secondary schools offer induction programmes and visits that run during the last term or so of primary school. Children are even asked which friends they want to stay with, so they can be put into the same form.

Heaton Manor School in Newcastle upon Tyne has a fairly typical set-up. They ask children for the names of up to three friends they want to stick with. "Parents can feel reassured that we spend a lot of time getting the right mix," says one of the year seven tutors, Hughie MacBride. "It's important that there's a limit on the number of friends put together, though, so that we can spread the pupils from different feeder schools throughout all the forms."

How about finding their way round? Secondary schools are so big, with endless miles of anonymous corridors. "Yes, they can find that bewildering at first. We generally tell them to give it a fortnight — by then there's no problem."

Rumours about gruesome initiation ceremonies are almost always ill-founded, says Peter Downes, yet they persist to an extent that they



All kitted out and about to walk through those school gates and into a whole new world

Andrew Burrman

START AS YOU MEAN TO GO ON

HELP YOUR child establish good routines from the start, says Peter Downes. Make sure he or she:

- packs bags the night before, giving time for last-minute washing and drying of games kit, and tracking down any necessary books or equipment
- gets to bed early — 11-year-olds get exhausted at secondary school. Compared to their day at primary school, they walk around more, they meet more people, and they work harder

- gets up in time to have a good breakfast, to prevent sluggish learning
- doesn't watch breakfast TV — it encourages a short attention span, and hypes children up
- gets the habit of writing all homework instructions down carefully in his or her diary or day book
- learns good work patterns, including working in a room where it is possible to concentrate

scare some year sevens. "When I was head at Hinchbrook School in Cambridgeshire," he recalls, "parents told us their children had heard the year sevens always got thrown into the holly bush on the first day. It wasn't true, but for reassurance" sake, I told them we'd post a teacher by the holly anyway — and we did. "If your child has heard something nasty, you can tell him it's highly unlikely to have any truth in it, and to report any hushing or rough-housing straight away. All children, and parents, should know before the first day the chain of command of the school staff. Particularly important is the name of the person to contact with a social or settling-in worry, and the one you see with

any academic work concerns. In a secondary school they're likely to be two different people.

Some important information can be gleaned from the school brochure or prospectus, which your child will have been given along with the uniform and equipment list: there may be a parents' guide or welcome letter, too (check the bottom of your child's schoolbag for any printed stuff that hasn't been passed on to you). Go through the information with your child a few days before the start of term so you're both clear about any rules or guidance.

Nigel Mellor, an educational psychologist from North Tyneside, says that children with even minor special needs may need extra support

in year seven. The more easy-going primary school day may have been manageable, but at secondary school things are different. "It can place huge demands on their organisational skills," he says. "And it's hard for them to get their act together. The two-week timetable may be difficult for them to cope with, plus all the things they have to remember to bring with them — equipment, notes, books, sports gear."

He's in favour of a "buddy system" for all children, not just those with special needs, which teams up year sevens with sixth-formers who can cast a watchful eye over them and support them through the tricky bits of the first term. Good primary schools should have liaised with the

secondary school about any children expected to have a harder time than average, but parents may also want to make an appointment themselves to talk to the form tutor.

One important thing you can do now, to ease the transition, is to practise getting to school, says Peter Downes.

"The journey to and from school is often a source of anxiety. Year seven is a good time, if it hasn't yet happened, for a child to go unaccompanied to school if possible. Do a practice journey there and back, checking any necessary transport changes, and decide which roads are safest. It's good to team up with friends to share the journey to school, too — makes it more fun, and arriving at school in a group is less scary than being alone."

Once he has started, it's natural to want to ask your child about his day, and to seek reassurance that he's not having a terrible time. But resist this, if you can. "Over-anxious grilling is not helpful," says Peter Downes, "and it could make your child anxious."

'Help Your Child Through Secondary School' by Peter Downes and Carey Bennett is published by Hodder & Stoughton at £6.99



'Far from the Madding Crowd' was Lucy's downfall

A far from satisfactory result

Unsympathetic marking can ruin promising lives. By James Ardglass

THIS HAPPENED during the early days of GCSE. The lessons remain the same.

Her name was Lucy. She was tall, painfully thin with long, jet black hair and fine, sharp features. She sat at the front of the classroom, her eyes following our thematic meanderings through Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Reserved, although not unpopular, Lucy was typical of those students who you recognise take your subject seriously. Intelligent, in the modest way some girls are, wrapped in that self-deprecating coyness that can smother and sometimes ruin the most promising. The same coyness that intelligent and ambitious girls learn to use as a shield to advance and mature behind; the ones who succeed and make those magic grades that defy the statistics. Pleasant, industrious, nonchalant; girls such as Lucy get on with it. Then there is fate.

His name was Burton. As senior examiner for the GCSE Literature, his judgement and accuracy were beyond question. Besides, in those days he was my senior. A retired public school teacher, Burton had an eagle's eye for detail: he preferred answers tailored to the needs of the question, and held a religious belief in the upholding of the examination standard. It was not hard to see why he was a senior examiner. Yet he had a thing about Hardy. I noticed it, so did others, usually in the standardisation meetings when some questions were scrutinised in detail. For some unknown reason, Burton always argued the Hardy questions down. "Not enough on Bathsheba," or "No real understanding of Boldwood here."

The difference was never great, but it could be significant if a candidate was on the borderline. So it was with Lucy. For obvious reasons, an examiner can never mark their own school. I knew Burton had marked my school. Curiosity drove me to the script library. My own school grades were as predicted. Burton had done a thorough job. There was Lucy, solid on *Mobse* and Milton, down on Hardy; enough to flush her pass away. As a junior

marker there was little I could do. I knew Burton could and would argue the case, yet I also knew Lucy would probably have passed with a grain more sympathy from another examiner. The best bet was an appeal after the results. On results day there was Lucy, looking pleased and collected, yet unable to hide her sadness. I knew she wanted to take A-level Literature. I spoke to her earnestly about appeals and taking the course regardless, and she smiled and agreed and thanked me and left. I phoned her parents, who promised to do their best.

Alas, Lucy preferred not to appeal. She did embark on A-levels, but chose Geography instead of Literature, lacking the confidence the O-level pass endows. At the end of the first year she dropped Geography and took up Literature and managed a D in just a year. As a teacher, I knew what kind of achievement this represented and how much better she would have done in two years. But for Lucy this merely confirmed her failure. I lost track of her after A-level, but heard she didn't apply to university. Two years later, I learnt she'd married a wide boy called Mike. The match seemed doomed and, indeed, within a year she had a child, but no husband.

Time passed. I always remembered Lucy as an example of how important it was as an examiner to get the grade right; to give each script the same consideration. No one will ever convince me Lucy's Literature result was not a decisive influence in her life. Yes, within the system of public examinations the candidate can fail, but the system should never fail the candidate.

Eight years later I heard of Lucy again. She was living in a Wiltshire village with her young son. My source told me she was content but unfulfilled. Apparently she was working on an organic farm, earning a bare living, but content far away from the madding crowd where the Burtons and Miles of this world would never touch her.

James Ardglass is a pseudonym. All the names in the article have been changed

PASSED/FAILED

SARAH DUNANT, NOVELIST AND BROADCASTER

SARAH DUNANT, 48, is a novelist and broadcaster. Briefly an actress, she has been a radio producer and presenter. She presented *The Late Show* on BBC2 from 1989 to 1995. Her novels include *Birth Marks*, *Under My Skin* and *Footlands*, for which she won the Silver Dagger Award. She is currently writing a screenplay of *Transgressions*, which was published last week in paperback. Her next novel, *Mapping the Edge*, is out early next year.

A Flora marathon? My central memories of Flora Gardens, my primary school in Shepherds Bush, are of a vast number of corridors — and of the headmistress, Miss Heron, who made you aware that there was a big game at stake here and you had to play it. My post-war generation was taught by women with such dedication and commitment that it really does not surprise me that we grew up to become feminists.

At the eleventh hour? My father, who was very intelligent, had left school at 14, and I always felt that one of the best things I could do for him was to achieve what he had been denied. When I was born, my parents were living in a bed-sit opposite Godolphin and Latimer Grammar School and our sights were set on that. During my 11-plus, when I was showing a tendency to write too much for too long, I remember Miss Heron standing over me and looking up at the clock and looking down at me. I went on to the next question.

Great Scott! Godolphin and Latimer had a huge hall with the names inscribed of people who had got scholarships, going back to the dawn of time, and in the first form we used to stand next to them. I used to read them during assemblies. I liked the fact



that the buildings were very old. When I was 13, Miss Scott walked into the room and taught us the Tudors. She must have been in her fifties but she looked about 80, with her hair scraped back in a bun. Whatever she said, I listened. I went into O-levels, knowing I wanted to do history. Don't mention the Gallie War! I got my eight O-levels; I had discarded science and I scraped through Latin O-level by learning by heart vast chunks of Caesar's *Gallie Wars*. In my A-levels, I got an A in history, an A in ancient history, an A in art (with a history paper) and a B in English — spectacular results which astonished everybody, myself

most of all. I did think seriously about a combination of drama and history at Bristol but Berenice Goodwin, the art teacher, said, "Don't do it; you can always act afterwards." She was very influential in my trying for Oxbridge. I took the Newham entrance exam.

When I came back, the headmistress asked, "How did it go?" and I said, "They never mentioned the Latin!" I got in.

The Mummy's course? I went au pairing to the West Coast of America. Then, having been in what was in 1969 just about the most exciting place in the world to be, I found it hard to settle down in Cambridge, which seemed like walking into an Egyptian mummy's tomb.

Must the show go on? I did plays every term and in my last two years I was in the *Footlights*, the girl who went to the Edinburgh Festival.

A lot of my male friends were getting the nod that it would be fine if they just concentrated on theatre. Two months before the first part of the trip, I went to my director of studies and said, "I'm committed to being an actress." She was very tough: "These places for women are few and far between and people would give their eye teeth to be here," she said. (It was only in the year after I left that the first of the men's colleges opened its doors to women.) "If you don't get a 2:1, I'll want to know the reason why!" This was another piece of the best advice I ever had. I didn't give up the current play, but I scaled back; I realised that it wasn't OK to pretend that work didn't matter. I graduated with a 2:1.

INTERVIEW BY JONATHAN SALE

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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(Temporary three year post - post no. 9387)

The School of Education has a vacancy for an ICT Project Officer to manage the planning, organisation and control of the School of Education's Website. You will be expected to assist course teams and Programme areas in the School in the use of the World Wide Web to support the delivery of courses and to manage the planning, organisation and control of all aspects of support to academic staff in relation to the ICT aspects of course development activities. You would be a member of the School of Education IT Support Team and would, as part of that team, contribute to the provision of advice and support to colleagues throughout the School. Other members of the IT Team have responsibility for the overall maintenance of the system and for supporting staff in their use of software.

You should therefore have a first degree or equivalent, a flair for ICT design, demonstrable competence in Web authoring and an understanding of the types of electronic mail, conferencing and management systems in use in the University. Excellent oral and written communication skills and proficiency in the use of business applications (e.g. spreadsheets, word processing, presentation software, etc.) are required. You will need to be able to work well under pressure, both independently and as part of a team.

Appointment will be made on the Academic-related grade 2 salary scale (£17,958 - £23,241 p.a.) according to qualifications and experience.

Application forms, further particulars and access details for disabled applicants may be obtained from the Assistant Secretary, School of Education, The Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA (telephone 01908-652148 or e-mail: education-recruitment@open.ac.uk).

Closing date for applications: 18 September 1998

Disabled applicants whose skills and experience meet the requirements of the job will be interviewed. Please let us know if you need your copy of the further particulars in large print, on computer disk or on audio-cassette tape. Hearing impaired persons may make enquiries on Milton Keynes (01908) 654901 (Minicom answerphone).

Equal Opportunity is University Policy.

<http://www.open.ac.uk/personnel/emp/pr.htm>



OPERATIONS - GRAPHIC DESIGN

Design Assistant

(Temporary 18 Month Appointment)

A Design Assistant is required as soon as possible to supplement our established Studio Team which is responsible for the graphic design of the University's distance learning materials, general publications and exhibitions.

You will be expected to carry out a range of production-related design tasks, principally the preparation of publications from original designs created by Studio Designers.

We are looking for advanced May-based skills combined with the ability to interpret and implement designs effectively in an educational context. Particular experience using Microsoft Word, PageMaker and Photoshop is desirable.

You will have a degree (or equivalent) or higher vocational qualification in Graphic Design or a related field. Exceptional applicants without these formal qualifications but with relevant experience will be considered.

Appointment will be made for eighteen months and will be made at an appropriate point on the Academic Related Staff Scale Grade 01 £15,462 to £17,266 - 02 £17,958 to £23,241 p.a. depending on qualifications and experience.

Application forms and further particulars can be obtained from the Director of Operations Office, Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, or telephone 01908-653238. There is also an after hours answering service on 01908 652980. Access details for disabled applicants may be obtained from Brenda Clements on 01908 652044.

Closing date for applications: 14 September

Disabled applicants whose skills and experience meet the requirements of the job will be interviewed. Please let us know if you need your copy of the further particulars in large print, on computer disk, or on audio cassette tape. Hearing impaired persons may make enquiries on Milton Keynes (01908) 654901 (Minicom answerphone).

Equal Opportunity is University Policy.

<http://www.open.ac.uk/personnel/emp/pr.htm>



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Salary in the range £16,232 to £25,669 pa inc.

The School of Law wishes to appoint a Lecturer with expertise in Immigration Law, the Law relating to Refugees, and related Human Rights and Public International Law issues. Professional experience of the operation of the law in these areas would be an advantage. A strong publication record in the field is essential. The candidate may also be asked to teach in other, more core areas of law and in units concerning transferable legal skills.

Informal enquiries can be made to Professor Colin Sumner (c.sumner@uel.ac.uk or 0181 849 3602).

For further details and an application form, please contact Personnel Services, University of East London, Romford Road, London E15 4LZ. Tel: 0181 590 7722 ext 4321 (answerphone) or e-mail: recruitment@uel.ac.uk. Please quote reference number 18A98. The closing date for completed applications is 24th September 1998.

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Applicants should be recent graduates with a good honours degree in electronic engineering or computing. Salary in the range of £15,482 - £17,288 per annum. Applications (CV and details of two referees) should be sent to Anne Hough, Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering, Imperial College, Exhibition Road, London SW7 2BT. Tel: 0171 594 6195, Fax: 0171 823 8125, email: a.hough@ic.ac.uk. Closing date: 27th September 1998.

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Engineering

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or write to: The Personnel Office, University of York, Heslington, YORK YO10 5DD quoting reference number 1/6119. Closing date for applications is 9 September 1998.

Graduates in Touch

EXETER GRADUATES - STAY in touch contact the Alumni Office today. Tel: 01392 269052. E-Mail: alumni@ex.ac.uk

EXETER UNIVERSITY SEeks GRADUATES of 1979 & 1980 for reunion weekend this September. Telephone the Alumni Office for details - 01392 269052.

THE 12TH OF September sees a reunion of the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, for those who took the Postgraduate Diploma course in Museum and Art Gallery Studies at the University of Manchester. For details telephone: 0161 275 2195

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FAST TRACK

GRADUATING TO THE WORLD OF WORK

Monday? It must be India

Globalisation demands that young executives travel more and more, and it's playing havoc with their sex lives. By Helen Jones

Lynne Farrage has slept in five different beds in the last week, not because she has an over-active sex life, but because her company told her to. Ms Farrage is a recruitment manager for IT specialists Perot Systems International and is one of growing band of high-flying graduates to whom constant business travel is a way of life.

"I've travelled a lot between London, the States, India, Dublin and Nottingham. It sounds glamorous, but it means that you don't really have a base. My friends think it's really pretentious when I say that I'm sick of getting on and off planes," she says.

Alex van Gestel, 27, regional management supervisor at the advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather, also travels a great deal. He has just taken on a new role running part of the American Express account for Europe and Africa, and usually spends two or three days of his working week abroad.

"It is very exciting. Some of the offices I visit may not have as much experience of marketing or advertising and it's good to feel that you can bring in the experience of the London agency," he says.

Extensive business travel used to be the preserve of top executives, but increasingly companies are sending younger members of staff on foreign trips in a bid to keep more senior executives happy.

"It's not uncommon to find [senior] managers taking four to six foreign trips a month, which can amount for 40 to 60 hours' travelling, usually outside normal working hours," says Kevan Hall of the technology company Global Integration, which has carried out research into business travel.

"Managers often come under pressure from their families to limit their travelling because they think



Advertising supervisor Alex van Gestel enjoys spending three days a week abroad, others suffer severe bouts of Intermittent Spouse Syndrome Neville Elder

the company is making unreasonable demands," he says.

As a result, younger members of staff are increasingly sent in their place, as Fran Wilson of the Institute of Personnel Development explains: "One solution is to send younger staff in their mid-twenties. They will have a few years' experience and be keen to prove themselves, and are less likely to have family ties."

Birkbeck College is currently

carrying out research into this area on behalf of the Careers Research Forum. Dr Jane Sturges, research fellow in the department of Organisational Psychology, says that the increasing globalisation of business means that frequent business travel or even living abroad may be almost inevitable when you join a multinational company. And sending recent graduates abroad not only solves problems for the company, it

can also put graduate careers on the fast track to the top.

"The experience is likely to be developmental for them, given the increased challenge and responsibility they encounter, together with the broader business perspective they acquire," she says.

There is also an additional benefit for companies, says Dr Sturges: "It will potentially cost the organisation less. Rather than offer an ex-

pensive ex-pat package, as they would have to with a senior executive, they can say that it's for your own career development, so we don't have to pay you so much."

Ms Farrage says that the frequent business trips, a six-month posting to Dublin and an imminent move to Nottingham have definitely furthered her career.

"There are lots of opportunities if you can demonstrate that you are

flexible, and I don't think I would do as good a job if I didn't do all the travelling," she says.

However, she adds that you have to be a certain type of person to deal with constant professional and domestic upheaval. "You have to have lots of energy and lots of confidence to be able to build a life wherever you happen to find yourself," she feels.

And there are definite disadvantages.

"You never really get to see the countries you visit, just the inside of conference rooms and hotels. You also have to make a real effort to sustain relationships with your friends, and it plays havoc with little domestic things such as picking up your dry-cleaning and having anything to eat in the fridge."

It is probably easier, she adds, for some senior executives in her company, "because they have wives who take care of domestic arrangements I have to do it all myself."

Mr van Gestel agrees: "I haven't been supermarket shopping in 18 months - and usually end up grabbing something from the off-licence. And when I'm in London I work long hours, and then I have to try and pack in lots of other things, such as seeing my friends."

Extensive travel can also play havoc with your health. Those in a relationship can suffer from "intermittent spouse syndrome", the symptoms of which include tension and sexual difficulties.

The usual pattern is a build-up of tension before departure, which is then repeated when the couple are reunited, and the partner who has been left at home feels resentful.

A recent survey of staff at the World Bank found that many of those who travel frequently suffer from depression, nervous anxiety and sleep disturbance due to the pressures of business travel.

Some even become addicted to constantly catching planes. "All too often international managers respond to work dilemmas by taking a flight. Many are travel addicts, for whom air miles are the ultimate badge of corporate commitment," says Mr Hall.

Ms Farrage says that she is not a travel junkie, and that all her trips are essential - but it does take its toll, she admits. "I have just learnt to accept that I don't really have a normal life."

A-Z OF EMPLOYERS IMAGINATION LTD

Age: 20
History: The company was founded in 1978 by the current managing director Gary Withers and, since then, the group has built its reputation on creating and managing spectacular events, environments and experiences. It employs more than 200 creative, technical and management experts to work under one roof in central London. Communications planning, retail and leisure design, project management, television production, films, multimedia, touring shows and theatrical events are all part of Imagination's remit, and its clients include Ford, Ericsson and Cadbury.

Address: Headquarters are in Store Street, London WC1. The Imagination building was designed by Ron Herron and a spokeswoman fêtes it as "one of the great buildings of contemporary architecture"; the design has indeed won several prizes, including the Riba National Architecture Award. The HQ's fabric roof is stretched across two buildings, with a light, airy atrium spanned by elegant steel bridges; overall, a rather nice place to work. The group also has a satellite office in New York.

Ambience: There are fluid project teams, and much emphasis is placed on teamwork. Divisions between specific design and communications disciplines are broken down in some cases. A spokeswoman claims that there is a "unique approach", with the company's breadth of in-house resources leading to a "vibrant atmosphere". She adds: "Friendships are encouraged by the open-plan office and firmly forged in the company bar after hours. Christmas parties are, apparently, legendary.

Vital statistics: Turnover three years ago was £44m, and rose to £52m in 1996/1997. Imagination was also ranked number one design consultancy in *Marketing* magazine's 1998 Design League Tables. **Lifestyle:** There is an



opportunity for employees to clock up air miles, as the company works on an international scale. A spokeswoman says: "An enlightened attitude means that movement between departments is possible, with people being able to progress and enhance their skills quickly."

Easy to get into? Last year, the group hired 74 new members of staff, with many graduates among them. CVs are kept tightly filed, and talent scouts are out and about, searching for new talent. Attitude, experience and skills are more crucial than formal qualifications, says the company's spokeswoman. **Glimmering alumni:** The company says that it can name none - it manages to keep all its bright sparks, it claims. **Pay:** There is no set starting salary for graduates; all the company will say is that pay is performance-related.

Training: Training is provided according to the needs of the individual employee, and it is usually on the spot rather than being a regimented graduate induction or across-the-board course. "Imagination is not afraid to give employees responsibility and believes that more is learnt with guidance on the job than in training centres," says its spokeswoman.

Facilities: The group's rather trendy restaurant serves high-quality food during the day and turns into a wine bar in the evenings. There are also a gym and a rooftop terrace for employees to enjoy when they have a spare half-hour. The Imagination Gallery at the top of the building is available for commercial hire. **Who's the boss?** The creative supreme and Imagination founder Gary Withers is the company's managing director; the chairman is Len Heath.

RACHELLE THACKRAY

Guinness was good for me - and my career

CV
GLENN TUTSSEL, CREATIVE
DIRECTOR OF TUTSSELS

Glenn Tutssel, 47, is an award-winning commercial designer and creative director of his own company, the brand-identity specialists Tutssels. Renowned for his "drinks and drugs" packaging, Glenn has built up his firm to have a £10 million turnover and a staff that numbers almost 70.

I HAD an art master at my school where I grew up in Glamorgan, who was a very nice guy called Doug Sutton. He was also a black belt in judo and I went to his classes in that as well. He had been a commercial artist; he taught me through to A-level and helped me get into West of England College of Art in Bristol. It was a great place to get started. I did a foundation course, pre-diploma, in art and design.

During the year I was there, they taught you how to draw from life, do sculpture, painting, fashion, typography - everything interrelates as graphic art. I decided I wanted to go down the commercial route. Although most of my inspiration has been from fine art, what I love is the idea of applying a visual message to things like packages, brochures and posters. Working to a brief is the thing I really get a buzz from.

From there, I went on to the London College of Printing to do a BA in graphic communication. I was very fortunate to be taught by Tom Ekersley - he was famous for those Guinness posters which you now see on show at museums. During that time I also did a lot of freelance work, which I now think is crucial for students. You have to go out into industry to get a flavour of the pressures and the time-scales. I worked for a book designer, several design companies and even a silk-screen printer.

My tutors, David Lock and Tom Petterson, also had a design company which I freelanced for before I left. It was a natural progression for me to go and work for them after I left college. I worked on brochures, corporate identities and annual reports. It's amazing when you get your first piece of work printed.

One of my first pieces was some packaging for a company in South



Glenn Tutssel: 'enthusiasm is 99 per cent'

Africa, which I'm still very proud of: it featured little graphics of sportsmen on glucose tablets.

I stayed there for 10 years and became a director and senior

designer. I was happy there but was offered a job at a company called Michael Peters, which at the time was probably the most famous packaging company in the world. There

was a massive redesign of packaging for Shell Oil. We won the business, and that helped me establish my name in the industry.

I did lots more packaging work and won three British D&D Silvers, which are the industry's most coveted awards. I'm a loyal worker and stayed with Michael Peters for 10 years. I became creative director and started to acquire a taste for running my own business.

So, when I was 40, I decided that it was time to set up my own company - that was in 1990, when the recession was looming. A client at Citibank said that if you can succeed in a recession you can make it any time. I thought it was sound advice, and when you're itching to set up, nothing's going to stop you.

I think that in your first year at work you have a honeymoon period. We were given a lot of work from Panadol, who are a massive European brand. Early on we also won a huge job to redesign the counter mats for Guinness. One thing I'm proud of is that we've never lost a client. I have this reputation as a drink and drugs man, which comes from doing a lot of work for SmithKline Beecham and also Johnnie Walker. Our packaging comes into play on a big night out and also the morning after!

I make sure that 60 per cent of my time is spent designing. One of the dangers of running your own business is that you end up doing things you were never trained to do. My brother gave me the best advice when he said, "Never let anybody else do the job you love."

I was helped at a very early age, so I have always tried my best to help out young designers. I am an external lecturer for several London art colleges. They are the lifeblood of creative art in Britain. My career advice is that enthusiasm counts for 99 per cent.

I don't think Mr Sutton is disappointed that I didn't concentrate on the judo. But I did teach judo for many years; it's a fantastic fitter and an analogy for business because on the mat you can either perform or you can't.

INTERVIEW BY MARK OLIVER

Final Examination Results Hotline

0845 600 7007

Friday, 28th August from 10.00pm onwards

One again we shall be manning the telephones late into the evening, offering Final Examination students the opportunity to find out their results as soon as they come in on Friday. Telephone our Hotline number to find out your results from 10.00pm onwards.

Michael Page

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For further details or to arrange an informal visit please contact Abigail Thrush on tel (0116) 258 5440.

For an application form and job description please contact Val Rolfe, Human Resources Department, Osborne building, Leicester Royal Infirmary NHS Trust, Infirmary Square, Leicester, LE15 5WW. tel (0116) 258 6378.

Closing date: 11 September 1998



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For an application form please call 0171 413 5811 quoting reference number ASA/98/3. Closing date: 11 September 1998.

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RESOURCE CENTRE MANAGER

Sir Frank White Business Centre, Rugby
SO1/SO2 - £18,006 to £20,922 plus essential car user allowance

The Resource Centre will be a purpose-built local access point for business support. Getting it up and running will be the job of the manager.

The objectives will be to provide a business information service, access to business support services and to introduce businesses to the benefits of using I.C.T. With on-line information systems and links to partner services it is the latest developments at the Council's successful Sir Frank White Business Centre.

This is an opportunity to shape a new facility and to make it work. The person we are looking for would have some experience in managing projects and of providing advice to businesses. They must have excellent interpersonal skills. The ability to set up and run I.C.T. systems will be essential.

Application forms and further information are available from the Personnel Unit, Department of Planning, Transport & Economic Strategy, PO Box 43 Shire Hall, Warwick, CV34 4SX. Tel (01926) 412458 (24 hour answerphone).

Closing date for applications 18th September 1998.

Interviews will be held in Rugby on 30th September 1998.



Warwickshire
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CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

Policy & Performance Review Adviser

£21,357 to £27,183

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For an informal discussion about the post, please contact Elizabeth Welton (Head of Organisational Effectiveness) on 0121-704 6088.

Ref: PRA1

Closing date: 18th September 1998

Application forms are available from:

Chief Executive's Dept - Personnel Adviser,
PO Box 18, Council House, Solihull, B91 3QS.
Telephone: 0121-704 6152 (24-hour)



All applications will be considered on merit. People with disabilities and other special needs will be guaranteed an interview.

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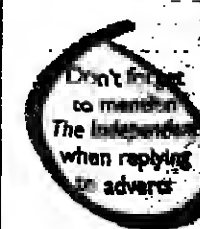
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NEW FILMS

LE BOSSU (15)
Director: Philippe de Broca
Sumptuous swashbucklers are fast becoming French cinema's stock-in-trade. This effort doesn't break much new ground, but is acted and shot with such magnificent braggadocio that its lack of originality is never a problem. Fabrice Luchini makes a supremely gleaming villain. Vincent Perez leaps hither and thither like a latter-day Douglas Fairbanks, while Daniel Auteuil's character seems like a cross between Cyrano and D'Artagnan. He tends the abandoned young baby who soon blossoms into the beautiful Anouk (Marie Gillain). Who cares about the clichés when the storytelling is so vivid?
Curzon Mayfair, Richmond Filmhouse

GADJO DILO (15)
Director: Tony Gatlif
Stephane (Romain Duris), a young Parisian, tramps down a long, icy road, somewhere in rural Romania, on a quest for Nora Luca, the gypsy singer whose music he discovered through his father. After a drunken night with Izidor, an old man he meets crying and cursing in the snow, Stephane learns gradually about the habits, superstitions and, above all, the music of this gypsy hosts. There is a warmth and humour to the storytelling, and an integrity that pushes this film away beyond being mere sentimental travelogue.
Renoir

THE LIFE OF STUFF (U)
Director: Simon Donald
A profoundly depressing Glasgow gangland drama. Performances and direction are pitched at such an overwrought level from the very first scene that the film doesn't have anywhere to go. The claustrophobic settings (almost the entire story takes place in a deserted warehouse) don't help. Nor does the melodramatic sub-John Barry music. Even Bremner and Gina McKee do their best as two hostages trapped in the basement, but the shock tactics (explosions, torture, ferocious bloodletting) do little but leave you numb.
NFT

METROLAND (18)
Director: Philip Saville
In this suburban morality tale, Chris (Christian Bale) is festering somewhere in the commuter belt, playing happy families, when his old friend Tony (Lee Ross) thinks that he ought to be out having fun. Most of the film is set in the 1970s, but the period is not reconstructed with any great verve. There is plenty that's likeable - the late-1980s Paris interlude, in which Chris acts up as a Left Bank boulevardier, is very endearing. But back on home soil, the storytelling is less assured, and, on the whole, Saville shows a dispiriting lack of ambition. Metro, Odeon Kensington, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket

THE X-FILES (15)
Director: Rob Bowman
Fans of The X-Files television series have been heard to complain recently that the show's incoherent approach to conspiracy theories had taken some of the novelty and lustre out of the subject. In which case, The X-Files as it appears on film isn't likely to offer any compensation. But you can't deny that it looks splendid on the big screen: the director Rob Bowman and his director of photography, Ward Russell, have concocted some awe-inspiring compositions. David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson reprise their roles as FBI agents Mulder and Scully respectively, and the screenplay (by the series' creator Chris Carter) gives them a meaty conundrum to chew on, involving a shifty secret government, a deadly virus from outer space and the world's oldest living organism. Duchovny and Anderson are most engaging through little dialogue and even less facial movement they manage to convey great tenderness. ABC Baker Street, ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

Geoffrey Macnab and Ryan Gilbey

GENERAL RELEASE

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD (U)
A perfect antidote to the bombast of Armageddon can be found in Michael Curtiz's merry and inventive romp, one of the greatest swashbucklers ever made. Rio Cinema

ARMAGEDDON (12)
This deeply stupid film purports to be a tender love story, a meaty action adventure and a global disaster movie in which a meteor is on a collision course with Earth. ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Notting Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road

THE AVENGERS (12)
Ralph Fiennes dons the bowler hat and wields the cane as Steed, Uma Thurman pours herself into a catsuit as Emma Peel, while Sean Connery sashays around in a kilt as August De Wynter, who plans to take over the world by controlling the weather. ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

BARNEY'S GREAT ADVENTURE (U)
Feature-length exploits for the big, jolly dinosaur ideal for the more undemanding pre-school viewer, an endurance test for adults. UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

THE CASTLE (15)
When his family home is threatened with demolition to make way for an airport, truck driver Darryl Kerrigan (Michael Catton) decides to fight back and stand up for his rights. Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Swiss Cottage

THE DAYTRIPPERS (15)
Worried that her husband (Stanley Tucci) may be having an affair, Eliza (Hope Davis) confides in her parents, only to find that the whole family wants to accompany her to Manhattan to confront him. Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Phoenix Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket

DR DOLITTLE (PG)
The thought of Eddie Murphy performing within the restrictions of a PG film may not be a promising one but Dr Dolittle shows that his talents are surprisingly pliable. Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Hill, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

EVE'S BAYOU (15)
"It's of passage drama set in Louisiana locations which have been devalued by too many Southern Comfort ads. Despite some intuitive observations, this feels for the most part like reheated Fried Green Tomatoes. Gate Notting Hill, Odeon Mezzanine, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero

FIRELIGHT (15)
The thought of Eddie Murphy performing within the restrictions of a PG film may not be a promising one but Dr Dolittle shows that his talents are surprisingly pliable. Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Hill, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

GANG RELATED (15)
A new thriller which gives a few welcome twists to the formulaic routine of drive-by shootings and five-talking homeboys. Virgin Trocadero

THE GINGERBREAD MAN (15)
The routine level of so much in The Gingerbread Man disappoints, but odd fragments remind you that here we have a great director (Robert Altman) marking time. ABC Swiss Centre

GODZILLA (PG)
The team which cooked up Independence Day is generally very adept at constructing enjoyable adventures. Unfortunately, in this case, their light touch has deserted them. Empire Leicester

GREASE (20TH-ANNIVERSARY EDITION) (PG)
Twentieth-anniversary reissue of the nostalgic American high school musical starring John Travolta as the slick haired heart breaker. Plaza, Virgin Trocadero

HANA-BI (18)
Violent yet elegant portrait of a brutal Japanese policeman pushed over the edge by his traumatic personal life. ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Metro

THE LITTLE MERMAID (U)
After years of churning out sub-standard animated features, this sprightly adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's story - rereleased for the summer holidays - began a string of hits for the rejuvenated Disney Studios. Pleasantly jazzy holiday fare. Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Warner Village

LOST IN SPACE (PG)
William Hurt stars as a frosty scientist who journeys with his family into space to save the Earth from environmental destruction and, of course, learns how to bond with his kids in the process. ABC Tottenham Court Road, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea

LOVE AND DEATH ON LONG ISLAND (15)
A warm, subtle comedy starring John Hurt as a reclusive widower who becomes obsessed with a young film actor (Jason Priestley). ABC Piccadilly, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green

THE MAGIC SWORD: QUEST FOR CAMELOT (U)
The first full-length product of Warners' new animation division, this Arthurian adventure looks - and courtesy of the inevitable Celine Dion, sounds - even cheesier than the average Disney effort. But beneath the surface there's an edge of genuine weirdness that will keep parents entertained, if it doesn't frighten the children out of their wits. UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

MAJORETTES IN SPACE: FIVE GAY TALES FROM FRANCE (18)
While homegrown artists generally show themselves to be overly reverent of the written word, the French directors showcased in this programme of shorts experiment successfully with form, narrative and visual language. ICA Cinema

PSYCHO (15)
I envy anyone who will get their first taste of Psycho with this new print. Imagine not being fluent in Hitchcock's language of tricks and seeing the Bates Motel for the very first time. Chelsea Cinema

THE THIEF (15)
Writer-director Pavel Chukhrai tries for that brand of unforgotten poetry pioneered by Louis Malle in Lacombe Lucien. Unfortunately he doesn't quite pull it off. ABC Swiss Centre

THE WEDDING SINGER (12)
A shamelessly dumb but very winning comedy about a hopelessly romantic wedding singer (Saturday Night Live's Adam Sandler) who falls in love with a waitress (Drew Barrymore), only to find that she's engaged to someone else. Odeon Mezzanine, Warner Village West End

ZERO EFFECT (15)
Thriller starring Bill Pullman as Daryl Zero, the world's greatest private investigator, a drop-out who subsists on tuna fish, tabs and amphetamines, pulling on reserves of wit and ingenuity when the time comes to crack a new case. Odeon Camden Town, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS



Film Ryan Gilbey

98 TWO VERY fine movies show at the Edinburgh Film Festival today. Michael Winterbottom's *I Want You* is not the sort of modern noir that comes along every day. It was shot in Hastings, and the various coloured filters employed are more likely to suggest an acid trip than a delirious down the murky alleyways of the human psyche. The film takes its title from the disturbing Elvis Costello song, and focuses on a hairdresser (the excellent Rachel Weiss, left) whose ex-boyfriend has just been released from prison. The movie is passionate, painful and badly behaved in that Nicolas Roeg kind of way. Edinburgh Cameo (0131-623 8030) 8pm

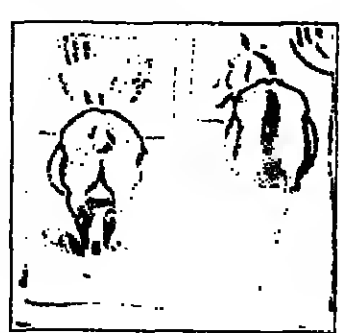
Theatre Dominic Cavendish

98 JOSEPH MONCURE's satirical work on debauched socialites, *The Wild Party*, written in 1926, gets a swinging stage premiere at the hands of Julia Smith and her company, Mouse People: racing lighting, a cinematic soundtrack, and two performers (Warren Kimmel and Marcia Carr) who look like they're having a ball. Join them. Pleasance, Venue 33 (0131-556 6550) 12.45pm



Art Richard Ingleby

98 THE ARTIST Jack McFayden used to be best known as a painter of people, predominantly urban, grubby and rather rosey-looking. This show of work from the past 10 years suggests that he's turned into a painter of places, predominantly urban, grubby and rather rosey-looking, but painted with wit and a kind of toughness that is effective. Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh EH8 (0131-650 2311)



Comedy James Rampton

98 COMEDY and poetry are not always the easiest of bedfellows, but they lie down together quite happily in the work of John Hegley (right). Looking like a cross between Elvis Costello and a DSS clerk, he revels in nonsense verse about subjects as diverse as his glasses (a fixation) and his beloved Luton Town Football Club: "The Lord was born in a stable because it was full at the inn. Luton are low down in the table because they're unable to win." Music Hall, Assembly, Edinburgh (0131-226 2428) 8.10pm



CINEMA

WEST END

ABC BAKER STREET (0171-935 9772) @ Baker Street
The Avengers 2.10pm, 4.20pm, 6.35pm, 8.45pm The X-Files 2.20pm, 5.30pm, 8.20pm

ABC PANTON STREET (0171-930 0631) @ Piccadilly
Circus As Good As It Gets 2pm, 5pm, 8pm The Big Lebowski 1.15pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm Jackie Brown 1.30pm, 4.40pm, 7.45pm The Thin Red Line 1.40pm, 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.40pm

ABC PICCADILLY (0171-437 3551) @ Piccadilly
Circus Lullaby 1.05pm, 5.05pm, 8pm Love And Death On Long Island 1.25pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm

ABC SHAFTESBURY AVENUE (0171-936 6279) @ Leicester Square/Tottenham Court Road
Hana-Bi 1.30pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.50pm The X-Files 1.25pm, 3.05pm, 5.45pm, 8.25pm

ABC SWISS CENTRE (0171-439 4470) @ Leicester Square/Piccadilly Circus
Deconstructing Harry 1.10pm, 3.20pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm The Gingersbread Man 1.20pm, 6.25pm La Grande Illusion 1.30pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm Kurt & Courtney 6pm, 8.30pm The Thief 3.55pm, 8.50pm

ABC TOTENHAM COURT ROAD (0171-436 6148) @ Tottenham Court Road
Armageddon 12noon, 3pm, 6pm, 9.05pm The Avengers 12.35pm, 2.45pm, 5pm, 7.05pm, 9.15pm Lock, Stock And Two Smoking Barrels 8.45pm, 9.30pm Lost In Space 12.45pm, 3.40pm

BARBICAN SCREEN (0171-382 7000) @ Moorgate/Barbican
The Avengers 6.15pm, 8.45pm The Beat Generation 8.45pm Untamed Youth 6.45pm

CHELSEA CINEMA (0171-351 3742) @ Sloane Square
Psycho 1.40pm, 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.45pm

CLAPHAM PICTURE HOUSE (0171-498 2242) @ Clapham Common
Armageddon 3.30pm, 5.30pm, 7.30pm, 9.30pm Firelight 1.15pm, 6.30pm The X-Files 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.45pm, 9.15pm

CURZON MAYFAIR (0171-369 1720) @ Green Park
Le Bossu 12.15pm, 3pm

ELEPHANT & CASTLE CORONET (0171-439 4968) @ Elephant & Castle
Armageddon 1.30pm, 4.50pm, 8pm The Avengers 7pm Dr Dolittle 1.30pm, 3.15pm, 5pm Lock, Stock And Two Smoking Barrels 8pm The X-Files 2pm, 5.15pm, 8.25pm

EMPIRE LEICESTER SQUARE (0171-437 1234) @ Leicester Square
The Castle 3.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm, 8.40pm

GATE NOTTING HILL (0171-727 4043) @ Notting Hill
Gate Eve's Bayou 1.55pm, 4.15pm, 6.35pm, 8.55pm

HAMMERSMITH VIRGIN (0870-9070718) @ Ravenscourt Park/Hammersmith
Armageddon 1pm, 4.30pm, 8pm The Avengers 1.40pm, 2.50pm, 4.50pm, 5.50pm, 7.50pm Firelight 1.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.40pm, 9.20pm Lost In Space 12.45pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm The X-Files 1.25pm, 3pm, 6pm, 8pm

ICA CINEMA (0171-930 3647) @ Charing Cross
Majorettes In Space: Five Gay Tales From France 5pm, 7pm, 9pm

METRO (0171-437 0757) @ Piccadilly Circus/Leicester Square
Hana-Bi 2pm, 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm Metroland 3pm, 5pm, 7pm, 9pm

CURZON MINEMA (0171-389 1723) @ Knightsbridge
Firelight 3.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm

NOTTING HILL CORONET (0171-727 6705) @ Notting Hill
Gate Armageddon 1.45pm, 4.45pm, 8pm

ODEON CAMDEN TOWN (0181-315 4229) @ Camden Town
Armageddon 1.55pm, 5.10pm, 8.25pm The Avengers 12noon, 2.55pm, 5.45pm, 8.40pm The Daytrippers 5pm, 7.20pm, 9.25pm

CINEMA

LONDON LOCALS

Godzilla 11.40am, 2.20pm, 4.40pm, 7.10pm, 9.30pm
Lock, Stock And Two Smoking Barrels 6pm, 8.45pm
Lost In Space 12.15pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm
Zero Effect 3.10pm

ABC HAYMARKET (0181-315 4212) @ Piccadilly Circus
The X-Files 1.15pm, 4pm, 6.45pm, 9.30pm

ABC KENSINGTON (0181-315 4214) @ High Street
Kensington Armageddon 1.45pm, 5.10pm, 8.35pm The Avengers 12.45pm, 3pm, 5.15pm, 7.30pm, 9.50pm The Daytrippers Mon-Wed 7.20pm, 9.40pm Dr Dolittle 12.15pm, 2.25pm, 4.35pm, 7.20pm, 9.35pm The Little Mermaid 11.40am, 1.40pm, 3.40pm, 6.40pm, 8.40pm, 10.40pm, 12.40pm

ABC LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS 6.50pm, 9.45pm
Lost In Space 1.30pm, 4.25pm, 7pm, 9.35pm
The X-Files 12.45pm, 3.40pm, 6.35pm, 9.30pm

ODEON LEICESTER SQUARE (0181-315 4215) @ Leicester Square
Armageddon 2.10pm, 5.35pm, 8.45pm

ODEON MARBLE ARCH (0181-315 4218) @ Marble Arch
Armageddon 1.35pm, 5.05pm, 8.30pm The Avengers 12noon, 2.15pm, 4.30pm, 6.45pm, 8.50pm Dr Dolittle 12.05pm, 2.20pm, 4.35pm, 6.50pm, 9.10pm Godzilla 11.55pm, Lock, Stock And Two Smoking Barrels 6.15pm, 9.55pm
Lost In Space 2.35pm, The X-Files 12.15pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8pm

ODEON MEZZANINE (0181-315 4215) @ Leicester Square
Eve's Bayou 1.45pm, 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.45pm The Object Of My Affection 1.35pm, 3.50pm, 6.15pm, 8.40pm Six Days, Seven Nights 1.55pm, 4pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm Titanic 12.05pm, 3.45pm, 7.25pm The Wedding Singer 2.25pm, 4.30pm, 6.40pm, 8.50pm

ODEON SWISS COTTAGE (0181-315 4220) @ Swiss Cottage
Armageddon 1.45pm, 5pm, 8pm The Avengers 1.30pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.50pm The Big Lebowski 3.15pm, 5.45pm, 8.15pm Dr Dolittle 12.55pm, 6.15pm, 8.45pm, 10.45pm, 12.40pm, 12.45pm, 2.50pm, 5pm, 7.20pm, 9.40pm Eve's Bayou 3.20pm, 6pm, 8.40pm, 11.10pm, 1.10pm, 3.15pm, 5.15pm, 7.15pm, 9.30pm The X-Files 1.10pm, 4pm, 6.40pm, 9.20pm

WARNER VILLAGE WEST END (0171-437 4347) @ Leicester Square
The Avengers 11am, 12.10pm, 1.20pm, 2.30pm, 3.40pm, 4.50pm, 6pm, 7.10pm, 8.20pm, 9.30pm The Big Lebowski 3.50pm, 9.30pm Bonnie and Clyde 1.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.40pm, 10.40pm, 12.40pm, 12.45pm, 2.50pm, 5pm, 7.20pm, 9.40pm Eve's Bayou 3.20pm, 6pm, 8.40pm, 11.10pm, 1.10pm, 3.15pm, 5.15pm, 7.15pm, 9.30pm The X-Files 1.10pm, 4pm, 6.40pm, 9.20pm

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THURSDAY RADIO

RADIO 1

(97.5-98.5MHz FM)
6.30 Kevin Greening and Zoe Ball
9.00 Simon Mayo. 11.30 Radio 1
Roadshow. 12.30 Newsbeat.
12.45 Jo Wiley. 3.00 Clive Wil-
son. 6.30 Steve Lamacq - the
Evening Session. 8.30 Global Up-
date. 8.40 John Peel. 10.30 Mary
Anne Hobbs. 12.00 Gilles Peter-
son. 2.00 Charlie Jordan. 4.00 -
6.30 Chris Moyles.

RADIO 2

(88-90.2MHz FM)
6.00 Alex Lester. 7.30 Sarah
Kennedy. 9.30 Ken Bruce. 12.00
Jimmy Young. 2.00 Ed Stewart.
5.05 John Dunn. 7.00 David Al-
lan. 8.00 Paul Jones. 9.00 King
of the Road. 9.30 What on Earth?
10.00 Greatest Singles of All
Time. 10.30 Richard Allinson.
12.05 Steve O'Brien. 3.00 -
4.00 Annie O'Brien.

RADIO 3

(90.2-92.4MHz FM)
6.00 On Air.
9.00 Masterworks.
10.30 Proms Artist of the Week.
11.00 Edinburgh International
Festival 98.
11.35 Colin Bell Invites.
11.55 Concert, part 2.
1.00 Proms Composer of the
Week: Sibelius.
2.00 BBC Proms 98. (R)
4.00 The Piano.
4.45 Music Machine. (R)
5.00 In Tune.
7.30 BBC Proms 98. The Berlin
Philharmonic have declared the
Proms audience one of its favourites
in the world, and they make a
triumphant return to the Royal Albert
Hall, proving their extraordinary
versatility in one of Mozart's most
delicately poised concertos - played
by the orchestra's principal flute - and
harp - contrasted with the vast
musical architecture of Bruckner.
Emmanuel Pahud (flute), Marie-Pierre
Langlume (harp), Berlin Philharmonic/
Claudio Abbado. Mozart: Concerto
in C for flute and harp, K299.
8.00 Defining Moments: Birth. 'We
shall not cease from exploration
and the end of all our exploring will
be to arrive where we started and
know the place for the first time.' T
S Eliot. In the first of two interval
programmes, Geoff Watts looks at

PICK OF THE DAY

BEFORE YOU begin worrying
about school league tables, settle
down and listen to Living by
Numbers (9pm R4). In the first
of four programmes explaining
the things everybody ought to
know about numbers, Fisher
Dilke (right) looks at the dangers
of statistics. For a start, most
schools are too small to provide
a meaningful sample, and then
there's the perennial problem of
'regression to the mean' - life's
tendency to average out, which

often creates the illusion that
things are getting worse. But it
is not an illusion that serious
Radio 4 programmes are
getting shorter. Consequences
(9pm R4) tonight has to squeeze
the entire history of the
contraceptive pill into 30 minutes,
a strain even for the excellent
current-affairs producer, Mark
Savage. Are listeners really
too stupid to take 40 minutes at
a time?

ROBERT HANKS



birth, its place in society and how
it is reflected in the arts.
8.30 Concert, part 2. Bruckner:
Symphony No 5 in B flat.
9.50 Postscript. Five programmes
this week in which Adrian Mitchell
looks at the poems and songs of
Bertholt Brecht. The readers include
Maria Friedman and Harold Pinter.
4. 'Hollywood: Elegies and Exiles'.
Brecht's opinions of America. (R)
10.40 Haydn and Bartok. Alfredo
Pari (piano). Haydn: Sonata in F, H
XVI 29. Bartok: Suite 'Out of Doors'.
10.45 Reinventing Berlin. Chris
Bowlby explores above and below
the new Berlin to see how
architecture is attempting to
mediate between an optimistic
future and a terrible past. (R)
11.30 Jazz Notes.
12.00 Proms Composer of the
Week: Rachmaninov. (R)
1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night.

RADIO 4

(92.4-94.6MHz FM)
6.00 Today.
9.00 Between Ourselves.
9.30 Speaker's Corner.
9.45 Speak after the Beep. (R)
10.00 NEWS; Women's Hour.
10.00 NEWS; From Our Own
Correspondent.
11.30 Bookcases.
12.00 NEWS; You and Yours.
12.57 Weather.
1.00 The World at One.
1.30 Brain of Britain 1998.
2.00 NEWS; The Archers.
2.15 Afternoon Play: Unforgettable
- Have You Heard the Music Man?
3.00 NEWS; The Learning

Curve Special.
3.30 Kit and the Widow Wander
about the Edinburgh Festival.
3.45 Sirens.
4.00 NEWS; Word of Mouth.
4.30 The Material World.
5.00 PM.
5.57 Weather.
6.00 Six O'Clock News.
6.30 Chambers. (R)
7.00 NEWS; The Archers.
7.30 Front Row. Michael Jackson is
40 this Saturday. John Wilson
reflects on the career of and
prospects for the singer who first
took to the stage at the age of six.
7.45 Dear Jayne Browne.
'Chemistry' by Maggie Allen. Young
Jayne's mission to educate a naive
young soldier has terrible
consequences. With Jill Balcon,
Stella Gonet and Jonathan Firth.
Director Celia de Wolff (4/5).
8.00 NEWS; Consequences.
Jonathan Fraedland looks back at
four political or social turning points
of the past 50 years. 1: 'The Birth
of the Pill'. The contraceptive pill
was heralded by some as the
greatest invention since the wheel,
but others warned of dire
consequences - both social and
medical. The extent of its influence
is only now being fully realised.
See Pick of the Day.
8.30 A Second Generation. Four
programmes in which Ekwu Ekwu
tracks the emerging identity of
black Britain. 'Black isn't What It
Used to Be'. African, Caribbean,
Bangladeshi, Indian all 'black'?
What is lost and what gained when
immigrant peoples take on the

political tags given to them by a
racist host country?
9.00 NEWS; Living by Numbers.
Fisher Dilke enters the murky
world of film. In the first of four
programmes, he finds that, when
you hit rock bottom, the only way
to go is up, and reveals how
this can make a nonsense of
league tables. See Pick of the Day
9.30 Between Ourselves. Olivia
O'Sullivan talks to eight pairs of
people who have had parallel
experiences. 3: Mary Kenny and
Anna Coote talk about the
changing face of feminism.
10.00 The World Tonight.
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Like Water
for Chocolate. By Laura Esquivel,
abridged by Pat McLoughlin, read
by Mia Soteriou (9/10). (R)
11.00 The Very World of Milton
Jones. Part three of the four-part
comedy series starring Britain's
funniest Milton.
11.30 Fresh Air Media.
12.00 News.
12.30 The Late Book: Rolling
Thunder Logbook.
12.48 Shipping Forecast.
1.00 As World Service.
5.30 World News.
5.35 Shipping Forecast.
5.40 Inshore Forecast.
5.47 Prayer for the Day.
5.47 - 6.00 Farming Today.

RADIO 4 LW

(94.5 - 10.0MHz)
9.45 - 10.00 Daily Service.
11.00 Test Match Special. 12.00
News Headlines; Shipping Fore-
cast. 12.04 - 1.00 Test Match

Special. 1.30 Test Match Special.
5.54 Shipping Forecast. 5.57 -
6.30 Test Match Special.

RADIO 5 LIVE

(693.908kHz MW)
6.00 The Breakfast Programme.
9.00 Nick Campbell.
12.00 The Midday News.
1.00 Payne and Co.
4.00 Nationwide.
7.00 News Extra.
7.30 Gower's Cricket Weekly.
David Gower and his guests look
back on the first day's play in the
England v Sri Lanka Test Match.
Have your say on 0500 909893.
9.00 Inside Edge. Rob Bonnet
looks at the issues behind the
sporting headlines.
10.00 Late Night Live. With Brian
Hayes. Incl. 10.30 Sport. 11.00 News.
11.5 The Financial World Tonight.
1.00 Up All Night.
5.00 - 6.00 Morning Reports.

CLASSIC FM

(100.0-101.5MHz FM)
6.00 Nick Bailey. 9.00 Michael
Mappin. 12.00 Requests. 2.00
Concerto. 3.00 Jamie Cullum. 6.30
Newsnight. 7.00 Smooth Classics
at Seven. 9.00 Evening Concert.
11.00 Alan Mann. 2.00 Concerto.
3.00 - 6.00 Mark Griffiths.

VIRGIN RADIO

(1215.1197-1260kHz MW 105.8MHz FM)
6.30 Chris Evans. 9.30 Bobby
Hain. 1.00 Nick Abbot. 4.00 Mark
Forrest. 7.00 Only Paul Coyte from
4.45. 7.30 Paul Coyte. 10.00
Mark Forrest. 11.00 Peter Poulton.
4.30 - 6.00 Jeremy Clark.

WORLD SERVICE

(198kHz LW)
1.00 Newsweek. 1.30 Westway.
1.45 Britain Today. 2.00
Newsdesk. 2.30 Composer of the
Month. 3.00 Newsday. 3.30
Focus on Faith. 4.00 World News.
4.05 World Business Report. 4.35
Sports Roundup. 4.30 - 7.00 The
World Today.

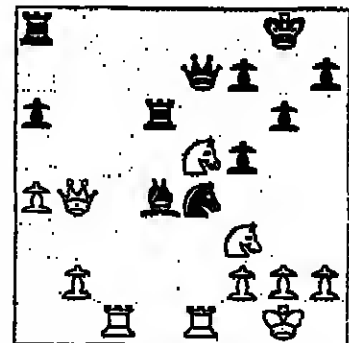
TALK RADIO

6.00 Bill Overton and Claire Cat-
ford. 9.00 Scott Chisholm. 11.00
Sean Bolger. 1.00 Anna Raeburn.
3.00 Tommy Boyd. 5.00 Peter
Deeley. 6.00 Nick Abbot. 12.00 -
6.00 Ian Collins.

INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

CHESS

WILLIAM HARTSTON



White: Peter Claesen
Black: Luke McShane

1 d4 Nf6 16 Qb3 Qc7
2 Nc3 d5 17 Rf1 b4
3 Bg5 g6 18 Nh1 Ne4
4 Bxf6 exf6 19 Nbd2 c5
5 e3 c6 20 Nd1 Bd5
6 Bd3 f5 21 Qd1 Be7
7 Nce2 Nd7 22 Nce5 Rcd8
8 c4 dxc4 23 Be4 cxd4
9 Bxc4 b5 24 exd4 Bb6
10 Bb3 Bb7 25 Bxd5 Rxd5
11 Nd3 a6 26 Qb3 Rb6
12 a4 Bb6 27 Qxb4 Bxd4
13 Nc3 0-0 28 Rxe4 fxe4
14 0-0 Re8 29 Nc6 Rxc6
15 Rcl Nf6 White resigned

LUKE MCSHANE, 14, scored a fine
victory in the Lippstadt Grand-
master tournament this month,
taking first place in the 12-player
tournament with six wins, three
losses and two draws. Under the
gimmicky scoring system of the
event which gave three points for
a win and one for a draw, he topped
the table with 20 points. Under the
usual one-for-a-win, half-for-a-draw
system, he scored the seven points
necessary to register his first norm
towards the grandmaster title.
McShane's victory came as a
result of a magnificent sprinting
finish. After eight rounds he was in the
middle of the table with four points,
but he then moved into an higher
and won his last three games to
overtake the field. In the following
game, he was aided by a disas-
trous attempt at a combination by
his opponent. In the diagram, the
game is roughly level after 28.Nxd1
Qxe5 29.Nd3. Instead, White found
28.Rxe4?? fxe4 29.Nc6, planning to
win the bishop on d4 after the
queen moved away. He must have
felt silly after 29...Rxc6 when
30.Qxe7 Rxc1+ leads to mate.

GAMBLING

DAVID SPANIER

ANOTHER ATTEMPT to get poker
off the ground and into commercial
orbit is on the launch pad. 'The
Tournament of Champions' (TOC)
is the name of the game. Its prom-
oter is Mike Sexton, a profession-
al player who is well known in Las
Vegas and an all-round good guy.
Mike's idea is to organise a tourna-
ment at the New Orleans, an
up-and-coming Las Vegas casino,
on 26-28 July 1999. The feature of
this event is that all the competitors
would have qualified by winning a
major tournament during the cur-
rent year, in the US or on the Euro-
pean circuit. Past winners of any
World Series tournament would
gain automatic qualification.

The TOC itself would be a com-
bination of games (limit hold 'em,
seven card stud and Omaha eight-
or-better) with a guaranteed min-
imum of \$500,000 in prize money -
plus a new car for all nine players
at the final table (where the game
would be no-limit hold 'em). The
entrance fee at \$1,500 a head is not
high by top tournament standards.
Most of the funding would come
from sponsorship. Four official
sponsors on line so far are: Bet-Ex,
Executive Convention Consultants,
the Financial Institute of Nevada,
and Players Travel.
I hope the idea works. Poker

players tend to be rather conserv-
ative in their playing habits, but
they will always go where the
money is. The success of the TOC
depends on the co-operation of a lot
of players and other card rooms.
The essential ingredient, if poker is
to be commercialised, is television
coverage. TOC is working on a pay-
per-view deal for the finals. Where-
as a game like snooker speaks for
itself, as do, say, tennis, golf and
even bowls, poker is difficult to
show on the small screen. In chess
it has been done by telescoping the
play so as to speed up the action.
Something similar is needed
for poker, plus a way of showing
the players' hole cards and giving
their thoughts by voice-over.

'The TOC provides all players
(both low-limit and high-limit) the
opportunity to qualify,' Mike says.
'It will create a level of excitement
and enthusiasm among players
that the poker world has never
seen before.' (Might as well be
optimistic.) He also says that play-
ers who qualify for the finals will
be required to meet certain stand-
ards of conduct - including a dress code.
'Our mission is not to restrict your
individuality, your earnings or your
freedom of expression. Our mission
is to take poker to another level.'
Way to go, Mike baby!

PUZZLE

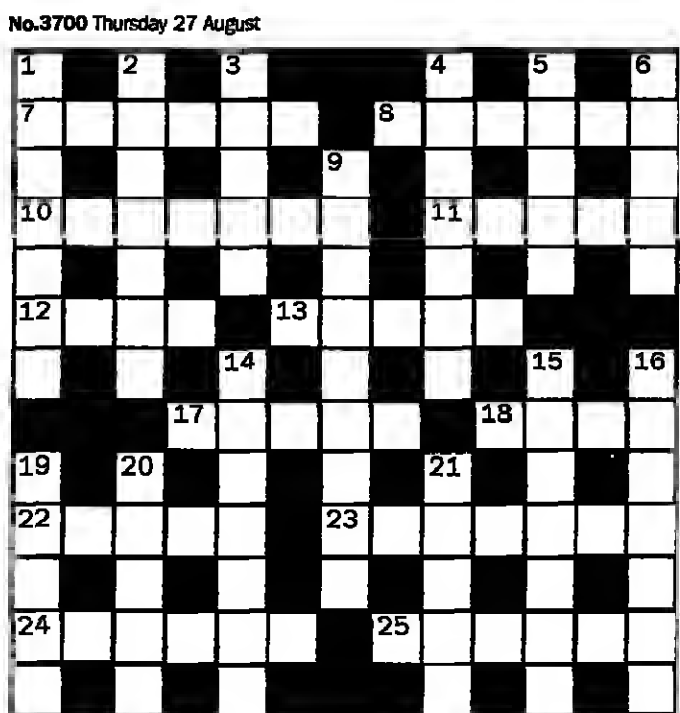
CAN YOU find a word square
formed by five five-letter words
that mean the following:

1. a fire-raiser,
2. a stage show,
3. a puzzle,
4. a casing,
5. a hurry

When you have found the words,
all you have to do is write them in
the order given, to form a five-by-
five square with each word reading
both across and down.
(Answer tomorrow).

Answer to yesterday's puzzle:
Blair, Prescott, Cook.

CONCISE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Schedule of prices (6)
2. Looking at (6)
3. Falsely sentimental (7)
4. Parcel out (5)
5. Dazz (4)
6. Metal block used by black-
smith (5)
7. Fierce stare (5)
8. Roman garment (4)
9. Muscular contraction (5)
10. Cathedral city (7)
11. Compel (6)
12. Fashions (6)

DOWN

1. Make a list of (7)
2. Short hairstyle (4-3)
3. Attach firmly (5)
4. Energetic (7)
5. Suburban house (5)
6. Gnome (5)
7. Remote or imaginary utopia
(7-2)
8. Feathers (7)
9. Eyeglass (5)
10. Serious (7)
11. Racecourse (5)
12. Defect (5)
13. Orocress (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1. Jenner, 4. Relics (Generalise), 7. Apologies, 9. Bute, 10. Hair, 11. Fever, 13.
Render, 14. Dablia, 15. Probes, 17. Ascend, 19. Stare, 20. Dead, 22. Gear, 23. Double bed, 24.
Enquire, 25. Trepan. DOWN: 1. Jobber, 2. Nope, 3. Roller, 4. Ragged, 5. Lash, 6. Sierra, 7. Aha!
Jawed, 8. Eagle-eyed, 11. Feels, 12. Raise, 15. Puddle, 16. Stable, 17. Ardent, 18. Darken, 21.
Dodo, 22. Gene.

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK-OF-THE-DAY

CYCLING (9am, 4.30pm Euro-
sport). With the shocking allega-
tions about drug-taking, the Tour
de France recently attracted the sort
of headlines it could have
done without: no sport enjoys
migrating from the back page to
the front in this way. Many riders
from that race will be taking
part in the World Track Cham-
pionships from Bordeaux in
France. More than 300 competi-
tors from 35 nations ride in what
for many is the major event of the

year. This is the venue where
Chris Boardman broke his first
world record, but last year,
French riders took most of the
titles. The novels of Graham
Greene (right) often make poor
films. But The Comedians
(11pm TNT) is an impressive
adaptation by him of his own
book, with Richard Burton, Eliza-
beth Taylor and Alec Guinness
enmeshed in tumultuous events
in Papa Doc Duvalier's Haiti.
JAMES RAMPTON



(770000), 10.30 Medical Detectives
(770000), 11.00 Forensic Detectives
(770000), 12.00 First Fights (223430),
12.20 Top Marques (223430), 1.00 Wonders
of Weather (770000), 1.30 Wonders of
Weather (223430), 2.00 Close.
SKY 1
8.00 Tattooed Teenage Alien Fighters from
Beverly Hills (47178), 8.30 Street Sharks
(40080), 9.00 Garfield and Friends (44060),
9.30 Simpsons (99043), 10.00 Games
World (271027), 10.30 Games World
(271027), 10.30 Kid Kidding (271027),
11.00 Adventures of Superman (94460),
12.00 Married with Children (44060),
12.30 M*A*S*H (44731), 12.55 The
Special K Collection (422222), 1.00 Gar-
field (44731), 1.30 Special K Collection
(422222), 1.50 Seely Pechel (422222),
2.25 The Special K Collection (422222),
3.00 Jerry Jones (443334), 3.35 The
Special K Collection (422222), 4.00 The
Oprah Winfrey Show (88005), 5.00 Star
Trek (4006), 6.00 The Nanny (2203), 6.30
Married with Children (44060), 7.00 The
Simpsons (99043), 7.30 Real TV (2214), 8.00
America's Funniest Home Videos (4406), 8.30
Seinfeld (3873), 9.00 Friends (3808), 9.30
Friends (3808), 10.00 E R (2203), 11.00
Star Trek (4006), 12.00 Nowhere Man
(80208), 1.00 - 9.00 Long Play (440604).

SKY SPORTS 1

7.00 Sky Sports Centre (772200), 7.35
World Wrestling (224800), 8.35 Sky Sports
Centre (99043), 9.30 Racing News
(770000), 10.30 Medical Detectives
(770000), 11.00 Forensic Detectives
(770000), 12.00 First Fights (223430),
12.20 Top Marques (223430), 1.00 Wonders
of Weather (770000), 1.30 Wonders of
Weather (223430), 2.00 Close.
SKY 1
8.00 Tattooed Teenage Alien Fighters from
Beverly Hills (47178), 8.30 Street Sharks
(40080), 9.00 Garfield and Friends (44060),
9.30 Simpsons (99043), 10.00 Games
World (271027), 10.30 Games World
(271027), 10.30 Kid Kidding (271027),
11.00 Adventures of Superman (94460),
12.00 Married with Children (44060),
12.30 M*A*S*H (44731), 12.55 The
Special K Collection (422222), 1.00 Gar-
field (44731), 1.30 Special K Collection
(422222), 1.50 Seely Pechel (422222),
2.25 The Special K Collection (422222),
3.00 Jerry Jones (443334), 3.35 The
Special K Collection (422222), 4.00 The
Oprah Winfrey Show (88005), 5.00 Star
Trek (4006), 6.00 The Nanny (2203), 6.30
Married with Children (44060), 7.00 The
Simpsons (99043), 7.30 Real TV (2214), 8.00
America's Funniest Home Videos (4406), 8.30
Seinfeld (3873), 9.00 Friends (3808), 9.30
Friends (3808), 10.00 E R (2203), 11.00
Star Trek (4006), 12.00 Nowhere Man
(80208), 1.00 - 9.00 Long Play (440604).

(8802), 8.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (2222),
9.30 Full Throttle (7743), 10.00 World of
Super League with Eddie and Steve
(44333), 12.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (2222),
12.30 Full Throttle (7743), 1.00 Euro Tour
Golf - BMW International Open (635514),
5.00 World Wrestling (730), 6.00 Sky
Sports Centre (2222), 6.30 Football
League Review (2244), 7.00 What a Week-
end (600), 7.30 Football Match (730),
8.00 Sky Sports Centre (2222), 8.30 Football
League Review (2244), 9.00 What a Week-
end (600), 9.30 Football Match (730),
10.00 Sky Sports Centre (2222), 10.30
Football League Review (2244), 11.00
Tight Lanes (2244), 11.30 Football Match
(730), 12.00 Sky Sports Centre (2222),
12.30 Football League Review (2244),
1.00 Formula Three Racing (2222), 1.30
Wheelbase (2244), 2.00 Football Match
(730), 2.30 Football League Review (2244),
3.00 Sky Sports Centre (2222), 3.30
What a Weekend (600), 4.00-4.30 Sports
Centre (770000).

SKY SPORTS 2

7.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (2222), 7.30
Sky Sports Centre (2222), 8.00 Racing
News (770000), 8.35 European Tour Weekly
(770000), 9.00 Football Match (730), 9.30
World Series of Golf (770000), 10.00 Euro
Tour Golf - BMW International Open (635514),
5.00 World Wrestling (730), 6.00 Sky
Sports Centre (2222), 6.30 Football
League Review (2244), 7.00 What a Week-
end (600), 7.30 Football Match (730),
8.00 Sky Sports Centre (2222), 8.30 Football
League Review (2244), 9.00 What a Week-
end (600), 9.30 Football Match (730),
10.00 Sky Sports Centre (2222), 10.30
Football League Review (2244), 11.00
Tight Lanes (2244), 11.30 Football Match
(730), 12.00 Sky Sports Centre (2222),
12.30 Football League Review (2244),
1.00 Formula Three Racing (2222), 1.30
Wheelbase (2244), 2.00 Football Match
(730), 2.30 Football League Review (2244),
3.00 Sky Sports Centre (2222), 3.30
What a Weekend (600), 4.00-4.30 Sports
Centre (770000).

Tight Lanes (2244), 11.30 Football Match
(730), 12.00 Sky Sports Centre (2222),
12.30 Football League Review (2244),
1.00 Formula Three Racing (2222), 1.30
Wheelbase (2244), 2.00 Football Match
(730), 2.30 Football League Review (2244),
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What a Weekend (600), 4.00-4.30 Sports
Centre (770000).

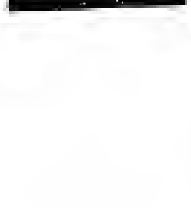
EUROSPORT

7.00 Sailing Magazine (2255), 8.00 Golf
(2244), 9.00 Cycling (4422), See Pick of
the Day (770000), 10.00 Football Match
(730), 10.30 Cycling (4422), 11.00
Mountain Bike (2255), 1.30 Motors Magazine
(2244), 2.30 Football (3808), 4.00
Football (3808), 4.30 Cycling (4422), 5.00
See Pick of the Day (770000), 6.00 Football
(3808), 6.30 Cycling (4422), 7.00 Euro
Tour Golf (635514), 10.00 Charlton's Football
Scrapbook (980234), 11.30 Close.

UK GOLD

7.00 Crossroads (770000), 7.30 Neigh-
bours (630366), 7.55 EastEnders
(630366), 8.30 The Bill (630366), 9.00
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(630366), 6.00 The

TELEVISION REVIEW



6 PM
7 PM
8 PM
9 PM
10 PM

Channel 5

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11/20/50